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WHO WROTE THE GOSPELS?

I

Let me say at once that this paper is to be a plea for old-fashioned views of the authorship of the Gospels, a plea that these views are more reasonable, and demand less credulity than recent opinions and theories.

The various views and theories as to the authorship of the Gospels fall roughly into three groups. There is first of all the traditional view, namely, that they were written by the four men whose names are generally attached to them—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Secondly there are the various earlier theories of the Higher Criticism which hold that they were written as continuous sketches of Christ's ministry by authors working on the writings of earlier scribes, as is suggested by the preface of what we call the Gospel according to Luke. Thirdly there is the most recent type—what is called Form Criticism—according to which the contents of the Gospels are collections of sayings of Jesus which were in current use among early preachers and evangelists, which are arranged in the four Gospels without any thought of chronological sequence.

The second and third types of theory have come into existence as the result of various attempts to account for the similarities and dissimilarities between the Gospels as wholes and still more in the details of individual incidents and sayings. This is especially true in reference to the Synoptic Gospels. Why, for instance, have Mark and Matthew left out the large section which is peculiar to Luke with the great parable of the Prodigal Son in the heart of it; or why have not the synoptics any account of the raising of Lazarus or the wonderful words in John xiii–xvii? Such inquiries are very natural and legitimate subjects for study. The question before us is, which seems the

most reasonable explanation. Is it the solution offered by the adherents of Groups Two and Three, or is the old-fashioned view equally reasonable, if not indeed simpler and more natural?

The second set of views which I have mentioned—the earlier theories of the Higher Criticism—are all based on the supposition—expressed or assumed—that the authors of the Synoptic Gospels were each compiling his book out of earlier written materials as their authorities or sources. They are thought of as proceeding as a modern student of to-day would do in a study of a period of history. And it is not to be wondered at that students, bookworms most of them who have had very little touch with men—should think so. Besides, they have some excuse for thinking so in view of what stands in Luke's preface. He begins his Gospel by saying, " Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which were from the beginning eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things which thou hast believed". And what it was, he summarises in the preface to his second work, the Acts of the Apostles, " All that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day when He was taken up". That makes it plain that our four Gospels were not the only records of the sayings and doings of Jesus. Two or three others, Mark, Matthew and John,—even if John were then written—are not many; and Luke was familiar with them. There is nothing, therefore, to forbid the idea that Mark and Matthew were in the same position as Luke. But we are asked to think of each of three men, without personal acquaintance with Jesus, sitting down in his study with a number of these records before him and after careful collation of documents compiling his Gospel. I cannot believe our Gospels were written in that way.

What, however, is the upshot of the comparison of the different accounts of the same events by these writers, the language in which they agree, the words and phrases in which they differ? It is something like this. Both Matthew and Luke, to begin with, have used as a basis a writing very like our Mark's Gospel, but not quite identical with it. Possibly it was a first

draft, made by Mark himself, while the finished article—our Gospel—by a later hand was yet so akin to the original that it was entitled to be called the Gospel according to St. Mark. But Matthew and Luke have also both used another document which contained a great deal that is not to be found in Mark. This document, of unknown origin, has been christened Q. Why Q? Because Q is the first letter of Quelle, the German word for Source. Its contents were mainly reports of longer or shorter sayings or speeches of Jesus. These seem to have had a special interest for the author of what we call the Gospel according to St. Matthew of which, as it stands, for some reason which I do not understand, he cannot have been the author. But he may have been the author or part contributor to Q, and so the Gospel which derives so much from it may be called by his name. As for Luke, he seems to have had access not only to Q but to many other collections of sayings, and accounts of doings, and was more anxious to get all his information set down in correct chronological order than either of the other two. But again for reasons which I do not understand the author was not Paul's friend Luke, but someone of later date who made so much use of Luke's earlier work that it became the habit to give Luke's name to the third Gospel.

The curious thing about all this is that the only source of any information about these supposed originals or sources or Qs or their contents is from our four Gospels. Indeed it is only their supposed contents that we get there. There is not a hint of their separate existence, nothing reminiscent of the Old Testament "Are they not written in the books of the Kings of Judah?" One cannot but admire, though all unconvinced, the detective skill and canine sense with which they track their prey to its lair.

The authorship of the Fourth Gospel is for two reasons denied to the younger son of Zebedee. For one thing it is said to embody a Christology which would have required a much longer time to develop than is covered by John's lifetime. Yet here is the curious fact that Professor Ernest Scott, who holds this view, says also that the Christology of the Epistle to the Colossians, an Epistle which he regards as the work of the Apostle Paul, is identical with that of the Gospel according to John. The other objection is that Papias as quoted by Eusebius mentions a John the Presbyter or elder, and he, not John the

son of Zebedee may be the author. But it is an assumption that there are two Johns, though that is quite likely, and it is gratuitous to ascribe the Gospel to this otherwise unknown person of whom it is not said by Papias that he wrote the Gospel. The reference to the *Presbyter* John may quite well be to John the son of Zebedee, for as Peter says of himself, " who also am an elder ", so John might have spoken of himself. Indeed he does so in his second and third Epistles. There is nothing in this objection. There really is no sound reason for not accepting the traditional view of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

II

The latest theory of the origin of the Gospels has much in common with what we have just been considering. Like that, it is that they are derived from collections of sayings of our Lord, but they differ in this; that they have been arranged without any thought of chronological order. The collections on which they are supposed to be based were lists of sayings of Jesus with suggestions of circumstances in which they may have been spoken, which were supplied to itinerant evangelists for use in preaching in the course of their journeys. These presumably were provided by the Apostles. Working on these the authors of our Gospels have compiled their books, as I have said, without thought of chronological order. The variety in the accounts of what seem the same events or sayings is easily accounted for by the way they have come into existence. Freely used by different speakers, not anxious about time or place or *ipsissima verba*, variety was inevitable and you have a reasonable explanation of the similarities and dissimilarities. But have you? It may explain the dissimilarities. But such haphazard collection leaves me amazed at the similarities and common sequences.

Does this give us a reasonable account of the origin of our Gospels? Not long ago I read the English translation of a work by Martin Dibelius, one of the leading authorities of this school. It is called *The Message of Jesus*. What have you there? Page after page of sayings of Jesus culled from the Gospels, classified as " Old Sayings ", " Mighty Deeds ", " Legends " and so on. The lists, or lists similar to them, may have been prepared and put into the hands of itinerant evangelists to be used by them on their missions as occasion offered.

The Oxyrhyncus Fragment I suggest may have been one of them, of which no use was made by any compiler of a Gospel. So our up-to-date scholars, having picked our Gospels to pieces to provide the material, we are asked to believe that the authors of our Gospels sat down before a heterogeneous mass of such lists, sifted out of them a selection of suitable material and each composed his own Gospel. Frankly, I cannot believe any such nonsense. I am willing to admit that in such a way a chapter like Matthew xiii with its seven parables, or Luke xv with its three, might have been composed. But a Gospel as a whole, nay three synoptic Gospels with so much similarity of contents by separate authors, I cannot swallow that. It is like starting to do a jigsaw puzzle without a frame, or a crossword puzzle without clues. You do not wonder at dissimilarities in books composed on such a plan. But how account for the similarities, and that the sequences which are not determined by chronological considerations are yet so similar? It is enough to look at the pages of Dibelius's book in which he lays out the possible material to see the absurdity of the whole thing. You are reminded of the daughters of Pelias induced by Medea to cut up their father on the promise that Medea will put him together and reanimate him. It is a hopeless task. You are reminded of Aaron challenged by Moses for conniving at the idolatry of Israel, and excusing himself, "I bade them bring their gold and ornaments to me and I cast them into the fire, and there came out this calf". Was the calf such an abortion that worship of it was unthinkable? Or was it a thing of beauty? To imagine that our Gospels—works of incomparable literary grace and individuality—are the result of the haphazard efforts of nameless nobodies or a mass of heterogeneous matter is more than my sophistical mind can swallow. Indeed the hotch-potch of Sholem Ash's *Nazarene* with its fantastic Gospel according to Judas Iscariot seems to me very like what a Gospel composed as form criticism supposes would be—something like an old-fashioned patchwork bedspread.

It is worth while to notice that this idea of the origin of the Gospels is not so new or original as its authors think it is. I remember coming across something very like it when studying for the B.D. about sixty years ago. Professor Stewart, of Glasgow University, one of our examiners, had a theory that the Gospel according to Luke was constructed on a plan some-

thing like this. He tried to divide it into sections dealing with separate subjects, such as The Sabbath, Forgiveness, and so on. It was not very successful and never got any very serious attention. The divisions were so subjective and the titles likewise that anybody could make another classification just as legitimately, and equally unconvincing.

Let us look now at the traditional view. As I have stated, the problem which all the minute and disconnecting analysis of the different Gospels raised, was due to the similarities and diversities among them. How were these to be accounted for? At the long and the last we are told that these Gospels of ours could not have been written just as they are, at first hand by their original authors. They must have worked with and on older documents to which three of them certainly had access. These documents are supposed to have been the following. There must have been a sketch of the life of Christ very like our Gospel according to Mark. Then there must have been a collection of the sayings of Jesus very like our Gospel according to Matthew, but also used by Luke. Then there must have been another collection of the sayings of Jesus, differently arranged and containing a good deal of new matter, and very like our Gospel according to Luke. Then the man who wrote the Gospel according to John must have known these three and added many new things which he had heard on the authority of John.

III

But why this " very like ", " very like "? Why not say at once, what all the investigations have practically brought them to, that the men who wrote our Gospels were Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and that the writings to which all go back are just the Gospels that for eighteen hundred years have been ascribed to them? Why not say that a great many of the variations in the way of telling the story we cannot give a reason for, —ignorance here is no disgrace—but we can easily imagine reasons. The authors had their own individualities. They were writing clearly for readers in different parts of the then known world. They were writing for people, many of whom had heard the story of Jesus by word of mouth over and over again, and in some cases from actual eye and ear witnesses of what was told. They were writing about the same person and reporting

characteristic sayings and events and specimen days in His life, giving specimen utterances from His lips. All these were in reference to a personality so striking and unique that it was almost impossible for them to avoid reproducing the impression He made with extraordinary sharpness and accuracy and similarity. These things suggest explanations of all the similarity and variety, and it seems easier to explain these in immediate followers of Jesus than in men of a later date who never met Jesus of Nazareth and are dealing only with documents and reports.

But what right have we to think that the tradition speaks truth which ascribes them to the pen of Matthew the publican, Mark the friend of Peter and Barnabas, Luke the friend of Paul, and John the cousin and disciple of Jesus? It is in this way. We have books, copies of the New Testament, more than fifteen hundred years old, which give us the words of the Gospels which we know from contemporary writers were then ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Over two hundred years before that—back, that is to say, to a time not much greater than that which separates us from the '45—we have books that tell us explicitly that the four Gospels, which we can recognise as our four, were then in existence and were believed by everybody to be written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These men, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, do not all belong to one place. Irenaeus was familiar by personal travel and residence with the life and thought and practice of both Asia Minor and the South of France. Clement in the same way knew the opinions of Egypt. Tertullian similarly could speak for the rest of the north of Africa. That is to say we have evidence of what was thought about the authorship of the Gospels within one hundred and ten years of the time at which the earliest of them may have been written. Nobody had any doubt about it. A heretic of that day wrote a commentary on one of them. Go nearer them still, to the days of Tatian, Justin Martyr, and Papias, that is to say, to within fifty years of the time when John was still alive, and what do we find? We find express testimony that Matthew wrote the oracles of the Lord in Hebrew, that Mark wrote a report of what he heard Peter say about the Lord. We find Tatian writing an elaborate harmony of the four Gospels, fitting them into one another, and what fragments of his work have come down show clearly that his four were our four. Justin Martyr tells us that the four

Gospels, which can be identified as our four Gospels, were read in public worship in the churches in his day with the same reverence and respect as were the books of the Old Testament. Consider what all that means! These things are not mentioned as curiosities or novelties. They are reported as what was familiar and ordinary. Within fifty years of the time of the death of John the son of Zebedee, our Gospels were familiarly known and generally read in public worship. That is not a thing that comes into existence in a day. When that has become a well-established and general custom it means that there is a history behind it, and if you allow for that, as you must do to be fair, you are carried back to the life-time of men who could check the accuracy of statements made in the Gospels and who could challenge current statements as to their authorship, if they were not true. These four Gospels are not the only writings which purported to give an account of the life of Jesus Christ. There were others—the Apocryphal Gospels—which partially survive; others of which we only know the names; others still which are only known by vague reference to their discarding. But these four stand out by the beginning of the second century as selected by the Church by a process of natural selection and survival of the fittest, as the reliable witnesses to the origin and Founder of Christianity. That is the testimony of history. It guarantees the trustworthiness, and that as the result of a sifting process, of our four Gospels.

But there is more than that. I am satisfied that the conviction is justified that their traditional authors are their actual authors. Take me back to within the life-time of the younger contemporaries of the reputed authors, as our inquiry has done; show me works in circulation bearing their names; let me hear not a whisper against this view; and then ask me to ignore all that and to believe that, eighteen hundred years afterwards, you have found out that they did not write these books, but that others wrote them from books very like them, originals which now have perished, but which may probably have been written by the men to whom I ascribe them—ask me to believe that, I say, and you ask too much. I am content to believe that these are themselves the originals.

And all the more so for these reasons. While you have been discussing the differences and similarities in the four sides of the frame of the picture, others have been studying the wood,

the carving, and the gilt, and all alike take me back to times where I cannot believe that others dared palm off forgeries on Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; to times where mistakes as to the authors could not have had time or opportunity to strike root and bloom without contradiction from the men who knew. Along the line of the study of the language used, as exhibited in the surviving literature of the day, and of the evidence of archaeology wrought in monument and civic documents that have survived, quoted by authorities like Blass and Ramsay and Weissmann, we find these writings reliable wherever they can be thus tested, and why not reliable all through? Having reached this, these Gospels witness to one another. Here is John, the last of them, for instance, evidently acquainted with all the other three. He has no hesitation in repeating some and leaving out more of what they contain, just as it served his immediate purpose, which he definitely states. Why worry further then, as to the motives of Matthew and Luke? Luke has been vindicated by Ramsay, that painstaking student and investigator of the records in paper and stone of those days, as a reliable historian in his " Acts of the Apostles". Why treat him as possibly a romancer in his Gospel? He tells us deliberately that he had many a written document to go by when he started to write his Gospel, and that his anxiety was to investigate and mark out the proper order. Why forbid us to think that Mark and Matthew were among his texts? Matthew, we are told, preserved the oracles of Christ in Hebrew. No Aramaic or Hebrew text of Matthew survives. But why may not this Greek Matthew which we have, which has too a peculiarly Hebrew savour about it, why may it not be a Greek version of that Hebrew record made by Matthew himself, the custom-house clerk, who would only be fit for his original job if he could speak and write more languages than one in his home of Galilee of the Gentiles, where Greek was as common as his native tongue? Why ask us to think that though Mark may have written the original, our actual Gospel has been worked up from that by someone else? It is not necessary. It helps nothing. It is more probable that we have the original here. So now we have got behind the Gospels to the men. The question is not simply can we trust what we find in the books, be the writers who they may, but are these men capable of inventing such a glorious story as the four-fold record holds?

IV

For myself I don't care who were the individuals who wrote the Gospels. They bear the stamp of truth upon them. The great mass of their contents is palpably the product of the earliest days of the Church's life and sprang into existence on Palestinian soil. Consider how much that means. It means that they must have been written and have taken shape within forty years of the death of Christ. Why do I say so? Because though cradled in Palestine in forty years from its origin, with the fall of Jerusalem, Christianity had shifted its centre from Palestine to the Greek speaking world. Its earliest literature is Greek. Its only surviving Gospels are written in Greek. But while elsewhere in its literature the Greek is native, in the Gospels while the words are the words of Greece, the style is the style of Palestine. In less than fifty years from the origin of Christianity it had become practically impossible to write the first three Gospels anywhere within its borders. The fourth Gospel is the best proof of this, so different in form and style. The pith of the Synoptic Gospels comes straight from Palestine, Palestine in the time of the men who knew Jesus of Nazareth, and who wrote and spoke when every word they uttered, every line they penned, was liable to challenge and contradiction if it was not true. What these Gospels contain is sifted truth, straight from Palestine, straight from Christ.

If that be so, why hesitate to accept the tradition that they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? Do you know any others of the early Christians better qualified to do so? Better qualified naturally to write this wonderful story, which we have seen comes from Palestine, the Palestine of Christ's day, full of a life that moves on a higher plane than this of earth, that embodies thoughts too deep for words, that speaks in terms that are spirit and life. These simple men could not invent it, not one of them, far less four.

Synoptic Problem! When one thinks of the labour, time and scholarship that for a hundred years have been given to this subject, one is sometimes tempted to ask *cui bono?* What is it all about? A mole hill has been magnified into a mountain and then elaborate works constructed to remove it! Surely the supreme fact which is apt to be forgotten in all this quest for the relations of Matthew, Mark, and Luke's accounts of things

is that at the back of all is not a document or set of documents, but a Life, a Person, who spake as never man spake, who went about continually doing good and in three short years turned the world upside down. When that is recalled, how trivial all the scrutiny of phrase and possible documents becomes, how infinitely more reasonable the old traditional view appears than any of the pretenders to a sounder position. And in any case Principal Shairp's great lyric holds the field.

"I have a life *with* Christ to live,
But ere I live it, must I wait
Till learning can clear answer give
Of this or that book's date?

"I have a life *in* Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die;
And must I wait, till science give
All doubts a full reply?

"Nay rather while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questioning of life and death and sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at thy feet
Take but the lowest seat,
And hear Thine awful voice repeat
In gentlest accents, heavenly sweet,
Come unto me, and rest;
Believe me and be blest."

ROBERT J. DRUMMOND.

Edinburgh.

PHILOSOPHIC FOUNDATIONS[1]

I

Philosophic Foundations is a book worthy of careful study. The author is a man of philosophical insight and erudition. He has a definite philosophical principle in accord with which he interprets reality. By the help of his philosophy Mr. Thomas desires to bring men " to the gates of the gospel ".

Mr. Thomas writes in the spirit of one who is deeply convinced of the truth of his position and of the crying need of such a philosophy as he presents. In an address delivered after the publication of his book he says: " I saw that the freedom of the Absolute Spirit must be as absolute as His Rational essence. I know it was a daring step to take, but further philosophic investigation has convinced me of its fundamental necessity and truth. I set idealism afresh on the way of development by affirming the absolute freedom of the Absolute Spirit as the second foundation-stone of the New Philosophy. I know that such a fundamental revolution as this in Philosophy will startle many minds, and will surely meet with all possible criticism and opposition from the sponsors of modern scepticism; but I have found it shed such amazing light upon the problems of the universe that I am convinced that it, or some philosophy closely akin to it, will shape the thoughts of the philosophic future."[2] The author, though speaking of his philosophy as a new philosophy is perfectly frank to admit that he follows the idealist tradition. He speaks with great appreciation of Plato and Hegel while yet he departs appreciably from the latter's dialectical method and " determinist " conclusions. He seems to have profited greatly from the recent development in British idealist philosophy represented by such men as Pringle Pattison, James Ward, Clement C. J. Webb, Hastings Rashdall

[1] *Philosophic Foundations.* By John Thomas, M.A. (Westminster City Publishing Co., Ltd., 94 Clapham Park Road, London, S.W.4.)

[2] *The Spiritual Nature and Constitution of the Universe.* Reprinted from *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute,* Vol. LXXI., p. 67.

and others, though he does not mention them. With them he sets aside the " block universe " of Hegel and the more absolute idealists like F. H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet. By asserting the " absolute freedom of the Absolute Spirit " Thomas feels he has laid the true foundation for life and all its manifestations.

To catch the spirit of the book under discussion we must first note its great emphasis upon reason, and the place assigned to it. Mr. Thomas is careful to emphasise from time to time that he has reached his philosophical conclusions quite independently of Scripture. In the address mentioned above he says: " The revelation of Holy Scripture is *sui generis*, and every reasonable man must admit that outside of that revelation God has allowed and arranged a wide field of truth for the investigation of the human mind."[1] Or again: " The conclusion from all I have said is this: While Divine Revelation has its own special range, the quest of mind has also an appointed range of its own, and this quest in a true Philosophy is in necessary and vital alliance with true religion and its Divine Revelation. There is a true Philosophy of being, whether we have discovered it or not, on which all the truths of life, from the lowest to the highest, must be based, and with which they must be in harmony. It is on these foundations of universal reason that all the heavens rest, and truth towers upwards into its highest Divine revelation.'[2]

These quotations already suggest to us a difficulty that we meet again and again in the philosophy of Mr. Thomas. We are told that philosophy and Revelation each have an area of investigation of their own. On the other hand it is evident that his philosophy covers the whole of reality in its quest. " All the truths of life " must be based on this philosophy and be in accord with it. Is it clear that on such a basis there is really any room left for Revelation at all?

At any rate Scriptural revelation, such as Christianity holds to, seems to us to be at variance with the conception of Reason entertained by Mr. Thomas. Scriptural revelation itself brings to us what for the moment we may call a " philosophy of being " an interpretation of the whole of life. Scripture offers a " life and world view". It says something very distinctive and significant about what is often spoken of as the domain of philosophy

[1] Idem, p. 61. [2] Idem, p. 62.

and the domain of science. The " facts " of the scientist are, according to Scripture, created by God. They fit into the plan of God. They are therefore God-structured. God works all things after the counsel of His will. Scripture is specific on this point. There are no " brute facts " i.e., facts uninterpreted by God as well as by man. We may even say that it is God's interpretation that is epistemologically prior to the existence of any fact in the universe.

To this something must be added with respect to the mind of man. Of this too, Scripture says something specific. In the first place Scripture says that man's mind is a *created* mind. This is of basic importance. A philosophy that recognises the created character of the human mind is one kind of philosophy; a philosophy that denies or ignores the created character of the human mind is another kind of philosophy. The two cannot walk together. A created mind recognises or ought to recognise the fact that the Creator's thoughts are high above its own thoughts. Isaiah speaks oft of this. Thus there is a Christian Irrationalism that is not only consistent with but the necessary implicate of the ultimate Rationality that is God and His plan. Man must think God's thoughts after Him as far as it is possible for a creature to do so. But man can see only the beginning of God's ways. By his intellectual efforts man must seek to bring as much coherence into his experience as he can. In doing so he must presuppose the Absolute Coherence that is in God. In God's light man sees the light. But man must not presume to be as God. He must allow for that which to him is new before him and out of reach above him simply because in the nature of the case he cannot fathom the thought of God. God is and must be incomprehensible to man. Not as though God is a limiting concept for man, a concept which will always recede as the horizon but which he may legitimately seek to exhaust. God as the ultimate self-contained absolute rationality must reveal Himself spontaneously before man can know ought of Him. True, in creating man God has already revealed Himself to some extent. But even so, as Scripture tells us in its very beginning, God planned to have man know much more of Himself than he could naturally know from the fact of his creation in the image of God. If then man seeks for coherence in his experience he should always realize that his coherence, though to be sure analogical of

God's internal coherence and therefore basically true, can yet be no more than analogical coherence.

This implies therefore (*a*) that a Christian is in the nature of the case utterly opposed to all forms of Irrationalism and (*b*) that a Christian is in the nature of the case utterly opposed to all forms of Rationalism. With respect to the first point we can rejoice in the effort of Mr. Thomas to oppose Barthianism. With respect to the second point, however, we are bound to maintain that he has been insufficiently critical of idealist philosophy. To be sufficiently critical of idealist philosophy is to reject its basic interpretative principle. Idealist philosophy speaks simply of Reason without making a genuine distinction between divine reason and human reason. I do not say that idealism makes no distinction at all between human and divine reason. It makes a distinction, to be sure, but merely a quantitative one. At bottom all Reason, divine, no less than human, is, for idealism, confronted with utterly brute fact. Plato worried about " unthought thoughts " about a " something " that stood in a manner of independence over against God and in terms of correlativity with which God had to be defined. And even Hegel, though as a limiting concept he honoured the Absolute, and sometimes speaks as though by his formula, the Real is the Rational and the Rational is the Real, he has slain the spectre of brute fact, none the less equates Being and non-Being at the beginning of his philosophy. Accordingly his dialectical method, itself born of illegitimate correlativity between bare potentiality and equally bare actuality passes on beyond God. Thus all forms of Rationalism, and, we may add, all forms of historic idealism are really irrationalistic at the core. Thus Rationalism is but a stepping-stone to Irrationalism.

Mr. Thomas is basically right, we believe, in saying that in Christianity we have a philosophy of the Absolute Spirit and therefore a philosophy of Absolute Rationality. In its notion of the self-contained ontological Trinity there is given us a Concrete Universal. In it unity and diversity are mutually exhaustive of one another. Thus, as Mr. Thomas says so well, there is within the Godhead a self-sufficient intercommunication. " The Christian conception of God is that, in His own Absolute and Infinite Personality He must be conceived as completely independent of the Finite creation. If we could conceive of the whole creation as being dissolved and swept into nothingness,

the Infinite Spirit would abide in the unassailable and undiminished perfection and glory of His own Absoluteness" (p. 28). Or again: "In Philosophy itself, to face the truth with complete sincerity and simplicity, we must accept the idea of Infinite or limitative definitions, for even the profoundest metaphysic must condescend to accept terms and phrases in their patent meanings—the meanings which they convey to the general intelligence of Man" (p. 28). If he had boldly maintained this fundamental contention in his book, Mr. Thomas would have cut himself loose completely from the idealist principle of interpretation. Idealist philosophy, in assuming that it may rightfully speak of Reason without reference to the creation idea, in assuming that "all possible experience" is essentially on one level, thereby makes God correlative to man. He who builds his philosophy on the uncritical assumption of the essential oneness in ontological status of divine and human reason, must, if he is not to lose himself in a formal identity philosophy, eventually confront God, no less than man, with brute fact and thus reduce God Himself to an abstract principle of unity that is somehow to string into unity equally abstract non-intelligible particularities.

Mr. Thomas, in spite of his best intentions to defend a truly rational philosophy and in spite of his best intentions to defend the doctrine of a God who is really Absolute, has been compelled by the force of his adopted principle of interpretation to fall into a species of Irrationalism and to make his God interdependent with the universe.

It is with reluctance that we make this basic criticism. But if we are ever to have a truly "evangelical philosophy", a philosophy calculated to bring unity of thought to the Christian student's mind, a philosophy that shall really challenge the mind of those we as Christians are seeking to win, we must needs be clear on our basic principle of interpretation. That basic principle of interpretation, there is no help for it, we must simply and frankly take from Scripture. It is nowhere else to be found. If sin had not come into the world this would be otherwise. Then man would, of his own accord, wish to interpret the whole of his experience in terms of the self-contained ontological Trinity. He would then wish to think God's thoughts after Him. As it is the sinner seeks to do the opposite. Born and conceived in sin as he is, he prostrates his intellectual efforts

to the justification of his self-assumed autonomy. The natural man—on this too, Scripture appears to be plain enough—hates God in the inmost core of his being. Even if by God's restraining grace he is far from being in the manifestation of his personality as bad as he might be and one day will be, this does not change the fact that underneath all of the efforts of the natural man there is hatred of God. He has "worshipped and served" the creature rather than the Creator.

It is accordingly not too severe a stricture on non-Christian systems of philosophy to say that underneath them all there is the sinner's effort at self-justification of his declaration of independence from God. The sinner is so utterly powerless in the vice of sin that he cannot of himself really attempt to interpret experience in terms of God. For him to do so would be to deny himself as a sinner. It is by grace alone that men can be saved from their never-ending efforts at interpreting life as ultimate autonomous interpreters instead of as derivative reinterpreters. It is therefore the frank acceptance of the Bible as the Voice of the Absolute and the acceptance of the regeneration of the mind of man which enables one truly to recognise the God which Mr. Thomas says a true philosophy requires. It appears to be quite impossible to divide experience into two domains, one of which is to be interpreted by reason and the other by revelation. Reason in the sense of man's ratiocinative powers must always and everywhere be used. But Reason as an epistemological principle is a fiction and a snare. There is no escape from the simple alternative that faces every man. He may either interpret all of the universe, himself included, in terms of God or he may interpret all of the universe, himself included, in terms of himself. If he does the former he does so because he has by the Holy Spirit's illuminating power accepted Scripture as God's revelation. If he does the latter he does so because he persists in holding, whether psychologically conscious of the fact or not, two false assumptions, namely: (*a*) that he is not a sinner and (*b*) that he is not created by God. These two are naturally involved in one another. The sinner may speak in exalted phraseology of Reason and of his desire to follow Reason fearlessly, what he really means, according to the basic principle of his being, is, that he will seek to interpret life as an ultimate interpreter who faces a universe

utterly non-structural in nature till he comes with his categories bringing order into chaos.

II

Before seeking to substantiate our main criticism of the book under discussion we would briefly examine one objection that has constantly been raised to the position we have taken on the relation of Scripture and human reason. Mr. Thomas himself really voices the objection we have in mind when he says: " It was through the truths which God has placed within the reach of human reason that Paul introduced the message of the Gospel to the Athenian idolators. He told them that God has so arranged the scheme of things that men might 'seek God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him; though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being. As certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring'. It was by this clear journey of the rational mind that Paul led the Athenians to the gates of the gospel, and some of them entered in, and found life."[1] To this he adds some familiar passages from the first section of Romans.

A careful exegesis of what Paul says in Romans and elsewhere does, however, not require us to reject the plain teachings of Scripture we have brought forward. For it should be clearly noted that if Paul meant to teach in the first section of Romans that the " natural man " can by the exercise of that *principium* of interpretation which alone as a natural man he honours, be led to the " gates of the gospel " he would have to contradict what he so plainly teaches, in Romans as elsewhere, that the natural man is at enmity against God and cannot discern the things of God. For Paul to ask men to find God by the exercise of their Reason according to their assumed principle of interpretation would be for him to ask them to find a finite God. All so-called " theistic proofs " built up on the basis of the natural man's use of " Reason " have, as a matter of historical fact, led to a finite God. The " clear journey of the rational mind " could never lead men to the " gates of the gospel ". What Paul did was not to recognise and honour the natural man's principle of interpretation but to challenge it. He

[1] *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, Vol. LXXI, p. 62.

told the Romans what they *should have known* had they rightly interpreted nature. He told them that the revelation of God was all about and even immediately within them, rendering them without excuse. He further told them, that as a matter of fact, none of them had truly interpreted experience. All of them as Calvin, following Paul, says of the "divine Plato" have lost themselves in their round globe. All of them have given exclusively immanentistic interpretations of reality. Paul seeks to bring men to the gates of the gospel and seeks to have them enter these gates by asking them to make a Copernican revolution. They are asked to worship and serve the Creator instead of the creature as they have formerly done. He points out to them that unless they interpret life on a new and radically different principle they are lost. He places himself upon their position, not really, but for argument's sake, and points out to them that unless they accept the new principle they are lost. His argument in Romans is not inconsistent with his challenge in First Corinthians: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe."

If it be said that we must be on common ground with those we seek to win for Christ we would reply that if we were really on common ground with them we should together be lost. The blind cannot lead the blind. And if it be said that reasoning with men is of as little use as a display of colours would be in the valley of the blind, we reply that Jesus made the blind to see and the deaf to hear. He spoke to Lazarus in the tomb. Did He place Himself on common ground with Lazarus? And if He did not was there no purpose in His speaking to him? Jesus gave Lazarus life, as He spake to him. Thus, if only we speak in the name and by the authority of our Sender, we may reason with men, preach to men, in short make every form of appeal to men, confident, that in ways above our understanding, the Holy Spirit will enlighten them so that they may see and accept the truth.

Only thus, it seems to us, can we avoid perplexing "embranglements" with any and every form of non-Christian philosophy. We do not say that non-Christian philosophy is absolutely wrong in every sense. Just as men are restrained by

God's " common grace " from running into the consummation of wickedness the principle of which is in them, so they may set forth many things that are far from fully wrong in every respect. We dare even say that they can produce that which is " good ". Even Satan does much " good " in the world. Through his efforts to the contrary God's grace and general virtues are set before the eyes of men in ever greater splendour. Any God-made mind, operating on the material of God's universe, is bound to help display the truth. Accordingly we as Christians may do what Solomon did when he built the temple of God. He had skilled artisans, not partakers of the covenant, prepare material for him. So we, as long as we ourselves assume the responsibility of the architect, can use much of that which an idealist or even a pragmatist philosophy has said.

When first we take hold of the book of Mr. Thomas we might be encouraged to think that it is along such lines as these that he plans to develop his philosophy. We have already quoted his excellent statement about the doctrine of God. We are to have an absolute Spirit " without qualification or limitative definitions ". The transcendence of God is said to be " as necessary a metaphysical idea " as His immanence. Against Hegel's " block universe " he insists on the freedom and independence of God. Says he: " Since this ordered universe has therefore only a relative and dependent existence, it is useless and unphilosophical to attempt to find the absolute *within* its dependency, as Hegel seems to have done by his evolving scheme of metaphysical logic; for the Absolute cannot be reached from below, but must be immediately apprehended from above" (p. 101).

It soon appears, however, that Mr. Thomas is evolving his Absolute " from below ". Following the idealist tradition he fails to do justice to the Biblical truths of creation and the fall in the assumptions he makes with respect to Reason. Nowhere in his book does he speak in the Biblical sense of created and sinful reason as over against uncreated and perfect Reason. True, Mr. Thomas makes a distinction between finite and Infinite Reason, but the distinction is patterned after the idealism of J. Caird. Speaking of the finite mind he says: " It is conscious of the Infinite, both in the measureless possibilities of its advance and in the mental equipment of universal Ideas through which this advance is achieved. But it is also conscious

of vast limitation in its powers and achievements, and of an encompassing Universe of Infinity which it must for ever explore, and can never exhaust. In this way the Human Mind and the Infinite Mind in and through which it realises itself are fundamentally and for ever distinguished from one another" (p. 20). All this seems sufficiently specific for us to feel that in it the Biblical distinction between Creator and creature is before us and that the absolute God is really "presupposed". The fact of man's limitation may simply mean what in fact it does mean to many philosophers and scientists, namely, that there is an utterly uncharted realm of non-structured existence as a primeval forest for man to explore. The question is whether God too is in the woods surrounded by a still larger and ever expanding universe of brute fact. If God is *also* roaming in the primeval He may be ever so mighty a hunter and ever so far ahead of man, but He is not essentially different from man. The mind of a great scientist may be far ahead of me as I seek to make a few experiments of my own, but after all we are fellow men surrounded by the uninterpreted. I may be well-advised to take note of what, coming before me, and with far greater capacity than I have, God has already explored, but my interpretation need not be and cannot be a reinterpretation of His. He is not my Creator nor the Creator of the facts I seek to know.

But have we not seen that Mr. Thomas insists strongly on the necessity of believing in a really absolute God? We have, but we are disheartened when he virtually identifies his God with Plato's God. When he has told us that the Absolute "must be immediately apprehended from above" he adds in the immediate context: "There can scarcely be any doubt that the Absolute was thus conceived by the mighty mind of Plato, when he set as the foundation of all Reality the 'Idea of the Good', that is, of the philosophically good, the Absolute Potentiality of all that is true and beautiful. This 'Idea' was transcendent, distinguished from the 'Ideas' impressed upon the objects of the phenomenal world. It was the Absolute of Rational Intuition, abiding in its own eternal glory" (p. 101). We are not concerned here with the contention that the Absolute must be reached by intuition rather than by the intellect in order to be seen "from above". We are concerned merely with the nature of the Absolute itself. And on that score it is,

we believe, highly confusing to speak as though Plato's theism and Biblical theism were virtually identical. Whether we take the " Good " or the God of Plato, both were confronted with brute Irrationality. Neither can with fairness be said to be absolute as the God of the Christian faith is absolute.

Speaking of his conclusion that the Absolute God must be transcendent, Mr. Thomas says: " There is nothing disappointing or strange or surprising in this, for Reason is the ultimate authority in all knowledge, and we can never go behind or beyond it. Since it is valid as the active agent in knowledge, it must be valid also in presenting and conceiving the Absolute after its own image " (p. 102). Thus Mr. Thomas has arrived at his virtual identification of the Absolute of Plato with the Absolute of Christianity by working " from below ". It is to contradict the idea of creation when he says: " It is in the pure self-conscious Reason of Man, raised to Infinity by the operations of the same Reason, that we must seek to find the nature of the transcendent Absolute " (p. 103). It is this sort of thing that Plato and idealists after him have sought to do with the result that for them the Absolute is an abstract principle of identity that must somehow bring into unity abstract factuality. An Absolute reached " from below " is no Absolute.

There is a sense, to be sure, in which we must start " from below ". Psychologically we must start our process of interpretation with ourselves. We cannot escape from ourselves and jump into the being of God. But this is not the point at issue. The real question is one of epistemology and not of psychology. And in epistemology we must begin " from above ". That is, we must presuppose God. Which is to say that we must take the notion of the self-contained, self-sufficient God as the most basic notion of all our interpretative efforts. If we fail to make God epistemologically prior to ourselves we cannot fail to descend with Plato and the idealists into a final Irrationality after all.

III

We turn now to see more specifically how Mr. Thomas gradually brings down his Absolute from a self-contained eternity to dependence on the created universe. One point on which Mr. Thomas constantly dwells is that of the " freedom of the Absolute Spirit ". Summing up in the lecture referred to what

he had written in his book he says: "I saw that the freedom of the Absolute Spirit must be as Absolute as His rational essence" (p. 67). At an early point in his book this point comes to the fore: "To the Absolute Spirit, Free Volition is as fundamental as the Infinite Essence of Rational Thought. A metaphysic of Infinite Reason without Free Volition leads inevitably to the mechanical enclosure of a 'block Universe', in which Man is no more than a pulse in the ticking of an Infinite Machine" (p. 30). A little later he adds: "The infinitely Rational Spirit is also Infinitely Free. After the vast and inevitable Rational mechanism of Hegel, such a thesis as this will startle many, but it is the only way out from the Rational 'block house' into the Freedom of the Universe, and is therefore unhesitatingly accepted as the Foundation of the Philosophy of this book" (p. 31).

We can have no possible quarrel with an insistence on the freedom of God. The question is, What is the nature of this freedom and how is it obtained? Is it identical with God's necessary self-existence, with His absolute freedom from dependence upon anything beyond Himself? We can most heartily agree with the form of statement which says that "the infinitely Rational Spirit is also infinitely Free", but we are worried when Mr. Thomas speaks of the "Freedom of the Universe" as though it were virtually the same as the Freedom of God. By asserting the Freedom of God, Mr. Thomas argues: "The process of the Universe appears no longer as a predetermined Mechanism, but as a great and inspiring Idealism both for God and man" (p. 35). It is perfectly apparent here that Mr. Thomas has sought for the freedom of God not by stressing His self-contained independence, but by opening up to Him an area of brute fact. Nothing could destroy both the freedom and the absolute rationality of God more effectively than to speak of a "process of the Universe" as an area of adventure for God. The Biblical doctrine of God is, we believe, altogether at variance with this. God's rationality and freedom are, according to Scripture, self-contained. This is the presupposition of that teaching which tells us that the process of the Universe is determined by God. The doctrine of the foreordination of all things in the Universe is based upon the absolute self-contained Freedom of God. To confront God with a structureless Universe is to make Him dependent on that

Universe. Absolute Freedom in God consists, according to Scripture, in His absolute self-confrontation in the ontological Trinity.

The capitulation to the Irrational at this early point is fatal in its consequences. After this God is endowed with the freedom of the Mighty Hunter in the dark Forest. The idea of God's Self-limitation is introduced as fundamental to the philosophy of the book (p. 35). "When we pass from the Absolute to the Ordered world," says Mr. Thomas, "we speedily discern that we have passed from a Timeless and Spaceless Rational Infinity to a Universe of which the perceptions are conditioned, and hence limited, by Time and Space. Consequently it is by this Self-Limitation through Time and Space that the Absolute Spirit wills to pass into the multiplicity of a Finite Universe" (p. 121).

Space and time, Mr. Thomas contends, are the "Willed Self-Limitation of the Absolute Spirit of Reason" (p. 122). Thus the "Rational Spirit of the Absolute" is "conditioned by Time and Space" (p. 138), while "continual change is metaphysically necessary in a Universe conditioned by Time and Space" (p. 156). The Self-Limitation of God later appears to be an act of "Self-renunciation" (p. 190) "so that the whole of Being can be regarded as an act or process of sacrificial love" (p. 197). God "adventures a Universe on the astonishing basis of perfect Moral freedom" (p. 236). Thus we come to what Mr. Thomas says he is almost ready to call the "*romance* of the Absolute Spirit" (p. 236). "Here," he said, "are all the materials for history in excelsis. Here is the free arena for the Moral battle of the Universe. Here is the complete potentiality of world-agonies and world-ecstasies. Here are fought out the issues of Being amid the din of many voices and the clash of many forces. Here the Absolute Spirit adventures all on the victorious power of the free Moral ideal. And here He Himself, the Lord of the powers of freedom, is the omnipresent Warrior in the arena of conflict. This is history indeed" (p. 236). Once more he adds: "There is an element of freedom in history which cannot be bound or measured by the categories, and there is enough of irrational thinking and doing to throw all the Rational categories into confusion. History is not the production of a 'block Universe'. The history of mankind is real history, and truly belongs to the 'Universe in the making'. It

is the creation of minds that are free, and are given the power of initiative because, as Rational Beings, they are also Moral Beings" (p. 252).

Enough has been said to prove that Mr. Thomas has sought for God's freedom by conditioning Him by forms of existence not under His control. On such a basis as this Mr. Thomas is not entitled to say that "the irresistible teleological force of the Absolute Spirit," is bound to realise "the perfect end," of "this Moral 'Universe in the making'" (p. 256). First to say that there are irrational forces, forces beyond God's control, and then to say that God's teleological force is irresistible is to take back with one hand what you have given with the other. If we make the Rational and the Irrational equally ultimate correlative forces in Reality we have reached a point where we ought to abstain from further mention of the Absolute God.

The sad consequences of following the dictates of an uncritically accepted Divine-human Reason to the end appear perhaps most fully when Mr. Thomas approaches the person and work of Christ. The work of redemption is presented as really being the natural consequence of the work of creation. In creation God has given to men as the makers of history the freedom "even to be irrational". God had to make this adventure for purposes of Self-realisation (p. 208). And God is bound to succeed. So He must and does follow up creation with redemption. We quote: "But the attainment of the Moral ideal is written in the nature of the Absolute Spirit and in the purpose of creation, and it cannot fail. The Absolute Spirit cannot rest until He sees His own Moral image in the Rational Spirits He has produced. His great Self-renunciation in creation must culminate in perfect Self-realisation, when Moral harmony shall be for ever complete. The passions of men must be subdued and the Moral ideal must be all in all. Either by penal judgment or by Moral attraction the Moral evil that opposes the Absolute must be destroyed" (p. 261).

Our objection to all this is not that God has a unified plan and that this plan includes redemption as well as creation. Our objection is to pooling God with the Universe in order then to speak of Reason as controlling all. A truly Christian philosophy should, it seems to us, begin with the notion of God as self-contained. Then there never can be irrational forces beside

Him. Then creation exists really by the fiat of His will. Then creation is perfect at the outset. Creation is no adventure for God. He is not as it were taking chances with millions of little ultimate creators who are free to produce the ultimately irrational. Thus God does not need to realise Himself through a huge adventure. If man sins against Him, He does not need, for purposes of Self-realisation, to follow up creation with salvation. When God saves men He saves them *by grace*. An " evangelical philosophy " should not be fundamentally inimical to the evangel. So far from leading men " to the gates of the gospel " a philosophy of abstract Reason leads, however unintentionally, to naturalistic conclusions. It is bound to trim the message of the Gospel till it fits into an impersonal pattern of Rationality. The postulates of such a Reason are no doubt " imperative " but they are not " convincing " (p. 85).

We deal with a major effort of interpretation in the work of Mr. Thomas. He has tried anew to make a modified form of idealist philosophy the theistic foundation of Christianity. He has made a splendid effort, but the best man cannot do the impossible. Mr. Thomas finds himself compelled to appeal from formal logic to a " unity of contradiction " (p. 88). In this he frankly follows Hegel. Life, he argues, " is far profounder and more complex than Formal Logic " (p. 273). Contradictions are said to be inherent in the relation of the Infinite and Finite (p. 273). No one need imagine for a moment then, that Mr. Thomas pretends to offer a philosophy of Rationality in which the union of all the dimensions of reality will be immediately penetrable by man's discursive intellect. It is to a *higher* Rationality that the appeal is made. Scarcely any serious philosopher to-day would do otherwise. That mystery out-stretches even the most penetrating efforts of man's intellect hardly a scientist or philosopher to-day denies. Thus we are face to face again with a simple alternative. Christian-theism really presupposes a Rationality that is *higher* than man can reach. It takes its position frankly on the doctrine of the self-contained Rational deity. It therefore does not believe in a union of contradictories. For God there are no unthought thoughts; He is the self-consistent ultimate Self-affirmative one who needs no correlative of irrationality in contrast with which He may define Himself. Such a God is really free. Such a God it is that has freely created the world according to a rational

plan which man can only in part understand. Such a God it is who alone can save by grace.

On the other hand all non-Christian philosophies, idealism no less than others, start with man. They first try to fix all reality by the pattern of formal logic. Then, driven to despair, lost in the woods of ultimate Irrationality, they resort to a logic of contradictions. Thus a philosophy of Rationality not based on the God of Scripture refutes itself by culminating in Irrationality.

If theological students are to be warned against Barthian irrationality, if science and philosophy students are to evaluate the "abstractions" of science aright they ought to be offered a truly rational philosophy, a philosophy rational from beginning to end, the philosophy based on the God of the Christian Scriptures.

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PREDESTINATION IN CHRIST

I

It has generally been the custom in Reformed theology to treat the doctrine of predestination along with, and indeed in between, the doctrines of the divine decrees and the creation.[1] In other words predestination was understood simply as the *decretum Dei speciale*, a particular part of the *decretum Dei generale* or the *decretum creationis et providentiae, h.e. rerum in tempore creandarum, conservandarum et gubernandarum aeterna praefinitio.*[2] Fundamentally all the decrees of God are one and were not distinguished from God Himself,[3] but in our apprehension the decree of predestination was recognised as distinct, having to do with the *consilium Dei de creaturis intelligentibus salvandis aut damnandis.* Thus we have predestination raised to the position of a separate article of Christian theology, one that to a certain extent stands on its own legs. So far as Calvin is concerned this fact has been exaggerated, but there is little doubt that in the period of Protestant scholasticism, predestination was thought of too much as an independent principle, and came very near to being a "Denknotwendigkeit". However, theologians were not unaware of the difficulty, and did not hesitate to say: *periculosa est tractatio.*[4] Calvin himself, however much or little he may have been influenced by arguments from reason and even experience,[5] made a vigorous protest against going beyond the Scripture, which he called the *Schola Spiritus Sancti.*[6]

Alongside this we have another, and perhaps a more important, characteristic of Reformed teaching on predestination, the recurring insistence that election has to do very closely with Christ. Common expressions are *in Christo, propter Christum, per Christum,*[7] etc. This element has often been overlooked or misunderstood by the critics of Calvinism, but that is a grave injustice. Without doubt the urge towards a logical systematisation of theology did foster, formally at any rate, a tendency toward philosophical determinism, but the insistence

on taking predestination *in Christo* acted like a powerful antidote. Here we get their thought at its best. Christ is regarded as *substratum electioni.*[8] The object of election was said to be *totum Christum mysticum, h.e. Christum cum omnibus suis.*[9] Again, *Christum ut caput nostrum esse primo electum ac deinde ipsius membra in Christo.*[10] Calvin calls Christ the *Speculum praedestinationis.*[11] All this is of the utmost importance because it means that the relation between God and man in the act of predestination is to be thought of in terms of the person of Christ. How does God elect men? Through Christ. Why does He elect them? Because of Christ. Just because Christ is, therefore, the author and the instrument of election, we may not think of it in any deterministic sense, but in terms of the way our Lord treated men when He Himself was on earth. Unless this aspect of the Reformed doctrine of predestination is understood along with the other side, it is not really understood at all. That applies not only to the critics but to many modern champions of Calvinism as well!

These then are the two sides of the Christian doctrine of predestination: that the salvation of the believer goes back to an eternal decree of God, and yet that the act of election is in and through Christ. It would be a mistake, however, to see a duality here or to give one any sort of precedence over the other—and yet it is just there that the weakness of the traditional doctrine lies. Calvin, for example, makes election precede grace.[12] In other words, while Christ is regarded as the instrument and the author of election, He is not regarded as the *ground.* Certainly, as I have said, they talk of election being *propter Christum*, but that means *cum respectu ad meritum Christi.*[13] The ultimate ground is found in the *arcanum consilium* about which one can only profess a *docta ignorantia.*[14] There ought to be no objection to the final inscrutability of the divine purpose, before which, as Calvin is always saying, we can only remain humble, but the tendency has been to drive a wedge in between the supreme will of God and the existence of Jesus Christ. There is the suspicion of deism attaching to the *arcanum consilium* used in this way. We cannot let go the truth that God has come in person in Jesus Christ, and that in Him we have a full and final revelation of the Father. Thus election *in Christo* must mean that Christ is also the full ground of election, *causa et materie.* The position of the traditional doctrine

here really implies that there is a higher fact than Grace, and that therefore Christ does not fully go bail for God. But that is disastrous, and might well in the end lead to belief in two Gods! Christ is Himself identical with the action of God toward men; He is the full and complete Word of God. There is therefore no higher will than Grace or Christ. There are no dark spots in the character of God which are not covered by the Person of Christ; as the express image of God He covers the whole Face and Heart of the Father. And while election must be grounded in the eternal decree of God, Christian faith cannot allow that to be separated in the very least from the Word. Christ is in His own Person the eternal decree of God[15]—it is a false distinction to make Him only the *causa et medium* and not also the full ground of predestination. That is not to say that all the purposes of Christ are not inscrutable. What could be more inscrutable than sheer Grace, than the existence of Jesus Christ? The love of God knows no "why".[16] Just because we are elected in Christ, we are not elected in ourselves—and no reason outside Christ Himself can be given. But that is not to say that Christ loves and forgives and elects us because of some other higher reason found only in an inscrutable divine counsel. Christ loves us because He loves us—and if we cannot answer "Why", it is because of the nature of love and not because Christ's love itself is to be thought of as subordinate to a higher and more comprehensive decree of Providence. True love cannot be grounded on anything else than itself, otherwise it is caused and calculated love.[17] Such love is neither Christ's nor is it compatible with Grace. Thus the tendency we find in the orthodox doctrine of predestination is ultimately one that must be subversive of Grace itself.

II

It is with this point that a doctrine of predestination must start: *In Christo*. Nor must it ever be allowed to trespass those bounds. There is no higher will in God than Grace. Predestination cannot therefore be made an independent principle of theology or viewed as subordinate to a wider doctrine of Providence.[18] Predestination adds nothing new to the doctrine of salvation by grace alone.[19] Predestination really means that our justification is *sola gratia*, and it adds no more to that

doctrine than the emphasis that our salvation is not the fleeting thought of a moment but a deliberate act of the eternal God, an act therefore grounded in eternity, while nevertheless grounded in Jesus Christ. In other words election *in Christo* is election grounded in the God-Man *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, and must be Christologically understood. If there is a paradox in the fact that election is grounded in Jesus Christ and yet in the eternal decree of God, it is nothing else than the central paradox of the Christian faith, the Incarnation of the Son of God.

It might be said that the danger to be avoided in the doctrine of predestination, is the danger of natural theology. The Reformers all realised this, and that is seen not only in their warning that the bounds of Scripture must not be transgressed. Some words of Luther written to an unknown man troubled about the question of his election, make that very clear. "God has given us His Son Jesus Christ, Whom we should make our example, daily meditating on Him, which will cause God's decrees to assume a most lovely aspect in our eyes. For without Christ everything is vanity, death, and the devil; but with Him all is peace and joy. For if a man is constantly tormenting himself as to the decrees of Providence, he only reaps anxious forebodings. Therefore eschew such thoughts as coming from the serpent in paradise, and instead look at Christ. May God preserve you."[20] However this doctrine is construed, the one thing to be avoided is the attempt to go behind the back of Christ to some "other" or "preceding" decree, which is not an "other" and not "preceding". To do so, is to make Christ of none effect. He is the perfect Mediator, and there is no word either of election OR DAMNATION outside Christ. Strangely enough the Reformers tended to find the ground of damnation partly (at any rate, if not wholly) in the sinner himself, which, to say the least, is hardly consistent with their own principles here. But if we are to take seriously the fact that God's action toward men is identical with Jesus Christ, we must think of the ground of damnation also as *in Christo!* But we shall come to that shortly.

The point I wish to insist upon at the moment is that election is through the Word. The sovereignty of God over men is the Sovereignty of His Word.[21] By His Word the world was created and by His Word men are redeemed. To talk about the sovereignty of God through His Word is another way of

saying what so many have said since Kierkegaard pointed out that God is always Subject.[22] But the important thing that this holds for our present discussion, is the fact that God's dealings with men are always supremely personal, that is, through the Word.[23] Now *in Christo* certainly means that. And it is only when a doctrine of predestination becomes disengaged from Christ, that it becomes abstract and savours of determinism. But this abstraction must not be allowed—that is to say, the separation between Grace and the divine decree of election. There is an absolute bond between God and His Word. God is always Subject! Predestination, therefore, far from being anything impersonal, is supremely personal, supremely so, because in Christ the Word. That God has come to us in that way, through Christ, means the acute personalisation of all God's dealings with men, election and damnation not excluded. But that is the difficulty, for in Christ God comes too near, and sinful men are not able or willing to bear the pressure and weight of a personal God—it is far easier to keep things more abstract, and so to keep God at a distance.[24] But such impersonal relations with God mean in the end some form of determinism. That is why determinism is always cropping up in Christian theology, because the dialectic of the sinner yields determinism.[25] Over against all this, Christian faith must cling to the fact that God encounters us personally in Christ through the Word. Just because He comes to us with and through the Word, it means that He has come not to manipulate human beings, but to bring them to decision. God has not come to elect stocks and stones but to elect human beings and to do it in such a way that He brings their whole beings under the sovereignty of His Word, that He makes them *responsible*,[26] and so for the first time truly personal. Before the Cross of Christ, says St. Paul, God in His long-suffering and forbearance " passed by " and " winked at " the transgressions of men perpetrated before Christ, but now in Christ when God encounters men and judges sin, He brings them to full responsibility. He does that, as we shall see, through His Grace, His Self-giving to men on the Cross—but just because of this encounter in the approach of God man is shut up to having personal dealings with God. The relation between God and man is narrowed down to an event that might be described as a *concretissimum*. That is the meaning of predestination, and it involves, not an abstract

impersonal relation between God and man, but the most personal conceivable. It means that man is brought to book, to decision. He is met in the midst of the impersonal life of sin, and made to feel the weight of the Eternal. The Cross proclaims at once the justice of God and the justification of the ungodly, and it is within these bounds that we are to understand the meaning of election and damnation. This needs more explanation, but what I am concerned to make clear at this point is the fact that the encounter of God with man in Christ means the exact antithesis of determinism. It means the acute personalisation of all relations with God in spite of sin, it brings man for the first time to full responsibility in which he must answer to God, but finds that the answer has already been given in the death of Christ for us all. The element of "Word" in all this is very important. It does not mean that we are able to hold God at arm's length and take up a neutral position toward Him before we decide[37]—that itself is sin—, but it means that while God comes, making a total claim over our lives, He comes not in an immanentist way, but in such a way as to invade the innermost circle of all our choices and decisions. "Word" means personal encounter, and therefore the repudiation of all determinism and indeterminism, indeed their destruction—for the fallen world is a world in bondage.

III

Some commentators and theologians are apt to accuse the Scriptures themselves of determinism, and in particular the famous passage of St. Paul in Romans ix. But this is a fundamental mistake. Determinism is as foreign to both the Old and the New Testaments as is abstract thought.[38] The difficulty with the New Testament is that people are apt to read it with Greek eyes, as it is written in Greek. It is a welcome fact that not a few modern New Testament scholars who are at the same time good Hebraists, have scouted this tendency, while from the Jewish side scholars have repudiated the validity of drawing parallels between St. Paul or Hebrews, for example, and Hellenistic Judaism. There can be no doubt about the fact that determinism is quite impossible for classical Hebrew; it is completely foreign to the whole Hebrew mind. That is a point we Westerners do not readily understand because our

language and thought is steeped in a powerful Greek tradition of impersonalism.[30] It is small wonder therefore when theologians misunderstand the New Testament in this regard. It is significant that one of the most potent forces in the recovery of "the personal" in our own day, Martin Buber, appears to have drawn his whole argument from the basic structure of the Hebrew language.[30] Without doubt, as much as anything else, it is the study of the Old Testament that keeps the thought of predestination healthy. The lapse into determinism is only possible with the employment of abstract categories of thought, such as cause, force, etc. To think of God in this way, through forms of thought that have been shaped through our interpretation of the world, is to drag God down within the abstractions of a fallen world. There is no sense in repudiating abstract thought altogether, for abstract thought has its place. In fact it is just because our world is a fallen world, and its relation toward God has been turned to criticism, that by necessity we think of the world as semi-detached or "planted out", to use a phrase of Tennant. It is within this world whose relation to God is abstracted that we find the validity of such ideas as cause, etc., but we have no right to transpose these to determine our understanding of the relation of God to us. Thus, for example, in the doctrine of "absolute particular predestination" the tendency is to think of God as a "force majeure" bearing down upon particular individuals. That is to operate with a view of omnipotence that has little more significance than an empty mathematical symbol. Omnipotence is not causality absolutised, potence raised to the *n*th degree—it is a different kind of power, and that we only know in revelation. We can never use the omnipotence of God as a major premiss, and argue from it. Omnipotence, as the late Professor H. R. Mackintosh urged so often, is what God does, and it is from His "does" rather than from a hypothetical "can" that we are to understand the meaning of the term.[31] What God does we see in Christ. He is in His Person and action the Almightiness of God—the Almightiness of love and holiness. It is in fact a natural theology which, by introducing into the Christian apprehension of God a foreign body, causes all the mischief—and there is no doctrine where natural theology causes more damage than in the doctrine of predestination. We shall see this once or twice again, especially in regard to the meaning of "eternity". Here

we must be quite clear about the fact that predestination is not just the religious form of determinism. It has nothing whatsoever to do with it. It has to do with Grace, the Love of God as related to the divine aseity. And that is the way St. Paul understands it in Romans ix. 11-13. A careful reading of the context from Chapter IX to Chapter XI makes that quite clear. There St. Paul is at pains to point out that Grace is free to all.

The Scriptures lend no countenance to a Jones-Smith theory of predestination, in which one is damned and the other elected simpliciter. Scripture tells us that some men are elected and some are apparently damned, but to understand that to mean that there can be no election without damnation, is to misunderstand it, for it introduces the element of necessity.[32] On the other hand the opposition to belief in the fact that some men are damned and some are elected is due to the belief in a free-will that somehow occupies a neutral position. If there were any such thing, the doctrine would be wicked—but actually there is no neutrality here, and it is the conception of neutrality (a figment of the natural imagination!) which causes a good deal of the mischief.[33]

Apparently the Reformers often failed to see that the Grace of God is as comprehensive extensively as it is intensively. They all agree that Grace cannot be granted because of merit, but is only in fact granted to demerit. The Holy Spirit has no predilections in regard to merit—but that is true extensively as well. The Holy Spirit has no predilections in regard to who are to be damned and who are to be elected, not even in the *Arcanum Consilium!* Predilection in regard to particular individuals is only apparent—judged on the basis of cause and effect—when one is seen to be taken and the other left.[34] No such thought occurs to St. Paul in Romans—it is a cardinal principle with Him that Christ died for all, and that Grace extends freely to every man.

The word "predestination" emphasises the sovereign freedom of Grace. It refers saving Grace to the divine aseity, to the action of the "I am that I am" which is wholly grounded in itself, and whose freedom is not therefore one which has any frontiers with any other. That is no doubt difficult for the finite mind to understand because our freedom *must be* bounded by frontiers. The sovereignty of God, the divine *Arbitrium*, is all comprehensive, even of the creatures whom He has made

with a fredom dependent on His own. It is a false understanding of revelation to think that because our freedom is bounded by God's will, His must be bounded also by ours.[35] And so the " pre " in predestination refers neither to a temporal nor to a logical *prius*, but simply to God Himself, the Eternal. To a certain extent, of course, PREdestination is the natural expression of the human mind for its understanding of the " per se " or eternal act of God, which it almost inevitably refracts in apprehension—that is why we naturally tend to think of eternity as strung out in an infinite line with past, present, and future though without beginning and without end, in the form of an elongated circular time! But even when we use such language that savours of such temporal priority, we must add immediately that there is no question of a worldly *prius*, for that is what a temporal *prius* would mean, and therefore also a logical one. Unless that is the case, predestination would be brought within the compass of the temporal-causal series, to be interpreted in terms of cause and effect. But PREdestination is the most vigorous protest against that that Christian theology knows—and therefore the most vigorous protest against determinism. And so the " pre " of predestination cannot be regarded as the *prius* to anything here in space and time; it is not the result of an inference from effect to first cause, or from relative to absolute, or to any world-principle. The " pre " of predestination takes election not out of time (as we shall see, because it is " in Jesus Christ ") but grounds it in an act of the Eternal which we can only describe as " per se " or " a se ". In other words, it is grounded in the life of the Godhead, that is, in the personal relations of the Trinity. Just because we know God to be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we know the Will of God to be supremely Personal—and it is to that Will that predestination tells us our salvation is to be referred.[36] But that is only possible if that Will has first come among us and been made personally known. That has happened (ἐγένετο) in Christ, and in Him the act of predestination is seen to be the act of creative Grace in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

IV

Election is the word faith uses to say that God's action in predestination is a choice or decision. Election guarantees to

us the freedom of God. His sovereignty, His omnipotence is not one that acts arbitrarily, nor by necessity, but by personal decision. God is therefore no blind fate, nor immanent force acting under the compulsion of some *prius* or unknown law within His being. A doctrine of election that involves the element of necessity at the human end cannot escape asserting the element of necessity at the divine end. If predestination were determinism, then God would not be God but blind fate, sheer necessity. It is strange that election should generally be construed in terms of determinism when actually it is the exact antithesis of it, and indeed negatives any determinism that there may be in the word. Election means that God exercises His freedom to break the bondage of a sinful world, and to bring Himself into personal relations with man. Election does not only mean that the action of God is personal from His side but also that it is personal from the side of Man.[37] Just because election is the act of *God*—who strictly speaking alone is personal—it means also an act which is creative of personal relations. And so the freedom which God exercises in election is a creative freedom, though the freedom which it creates is essentially dependent freedom while the divine freedom is independent, "a se" freedom; the freedom of the Creator as distinguished from the freedom of the creature.[38] Another way of putting this, is to say that election is an act of love. Election means that God has chosen us because He loves us, and that He loves us because He loves us. The reason why God loves us is love. To give any other reason for love than love itself, whether it be a reason in God Himself, such as an election according to some divine *prius* that precedes Grace, or whether it be in man, is to deny love, to disrupt the Christian apprehension of God and to condemn the world to chaos!

Just because election is an act of love like that, it is true before we know it to be true, and therefore we are not free to make it true—we can only acknowledge its truth in obedience, or of course deny it by our disobedience. The man who knows himself to be chosen by God cannot say that he himself chose God[39]—no decision of his can add anything to the fact that God has chosen him already in Christ. No matter what he does or thinks man cannot constitute himself a being under grace, he cannot constitute himself a man loved by God,[40] he is that already. It is without the scope of human *arbitrium* altogether,

and to bring in the concept of free-will is simply beside the mark.

There is something more we must add to the explanation of the word "election". Just because election involves love and decision, it is not something general and timeless, but something unique[41]—and although within the sphere of human choices and decisions, within the realm of contingency, it is not an event in a series, and cannot therefore be understood in terms of anything else. As such it is a decision that is absolutely decisive—but that character is not given to it by man. If it were, then it would be an event in a series, a worldly event, part of the causal continuum. Paradoxically enough, to give man *arbitrium* over the act of his own salvation is to land him in determinism.

It might be said that when everything is boiled down the doctrine of predestination or election comes to this: I am saved by God, by the eternal God. But if I am saved by Eternity, I am saved from all eternity unto all eternity. That certainly represents much of the pith of the matter, but the question is, What do we mean by eternity? And it is perhaps over that that the many controversies, which have not been occasioned simply by differing uses of languages, have been involved. These controversies cannot be set aside as though they were needless hair-splitting.[42] Most of them did involve important points about which decision must be taken in any discussion of the subject. Against this it can be said that there would have been much less controversy had disputants kept to the point—and the point is, it seems to me, that election is in Christ. It is from here that we may start in the discussion of the meaning of eternity. And after all it is only because of the coming of Christ, His revelation and redemption, that predestination has a place at all in theology. The Incarnation of the Son of God must mean the moving of eternity into time. On the face of it that is an impossible thought for the usual philosophical account of eternity which is so closely bound up with the immutability of God, and the relativity of time. But that is the central fact of the Christian faith. If Christ is God, if God has come into the world in Jesus Christ, that does mean for us an approach of eternity into time. But that means again that Eternity does not treat time as mere appearance, the relative that ultimately disappears before, or is swallowed up by, the absolute. If

eternity moves into time, then that means that time relations do have meaning for eternity. They are not set aside, but are implied and wanted. Eternity invades time right in the midst of all its contingency and its necessity, right in the midst of its choices and freedom, and its bondage, and sets them in a definite relation to Eternity which confronts them. Two things are implied here. The first is that Eternity devaluates time. The axe is laid to the root of the tree. The coming of eternity necessarily means judgment, judgment upon the discontinuity of time with eternity, judgment upon a fallen world. But again it means the setting up of time relations, and it takes these in earnest. In other words with the coming of Christ we have judgment come to the Kingdom of this world, to this present evil age (world), and the bringing in of the Kingdom of God which involves a new heaven and a new earth—a new time![43] Thus while the coming of Christ does mean the judgment of the world—and all judgment is committed unto Him, just because He brings forgiveness—it means too, a recreation of the world, and the accent must be laid upon the recreation. It is in this light that we are to think of predestination. Predestination is the act of Salvation seen to be grounded in the eternal will of God as made known in Jesus Christ—but just because in Jesus Christ is no docetic person but also man and real man, personal and historical, then election must be understood as an act *also in the field of time and history.* It does not mean the repudiation of human freedom but its creation, and the repudiation of bondage. The encounter of Christ with man occurs right in the midst of *his* life with all his freedom of choice and decision, in the midst of his sin and bondage, and it places him under the total claim of God. He is not his own, he is bought with a price. Man is brought to book and for the first time made fully responsible to God when face to face with the Cross, and there he is judged. That applies to all men. But God chooses to judge men only in Christ, that is to say, He judges them supremely by His Grace—by bringing them forgiveness. And forgiveness is only given to those that the forgiver condemns. And thus Christ is in Himself as He works out the salvation of Man on the Cross, the ground, the medium, and the cause of predestination all in One. We are in fact all elected and damned in Him. We shall consider that again shortly, but the point I want to make here is this: that the

approach of God in Christ, and Christ the Word, the invasion of eternity into time, means that God takes seriously the relations of time such as human reactions, choices and decisions, and predestination means that precisely these are brought face to face with the Eternal. Man's will is not overridden. His self-will is certainly judged and forgiven, but it is recreated and determined by love; it is directed in the only path where it can find true freedom—and in all that it is man that wills! God is not elected! Nor is it God that believes!

V

At this point it will be necessary to devote some attention to what is called " free-will ". Free-will is really an ambiguous word, and in the history of thought is the correlative of determinism. As a neutral term it is a pure figment, and it is failure to realise that which causes a good deal of the mischief. That is not to say that freedom is imaginary—the question is Freedom for what? And here it may be better to follow Luther's distinction between *arbitrium* and *voluntas*.[44] There is no sense in denying *voluntas*, which practically amounts to a *contradictio in adjecto*. There is no such thing as a will that does not will in some way or other—while a secret identification of all the operations of will with the all-comprehensive immanent working of Omnipotence is to be utterly repudiated. Man has a *voluntas* dependent to a large extent on the object towards which it is directed, but a real *voluntas* which it is sin to override. Luther makes it quite plain in the *De Servo Arbitrio* that he had no concern to deny the freedom of man in respect of lower things. Man was created with dominion over the things of the world in which he lives, and he still has that, though doubtless that also is impaired. In respect of these things then the human *voluntas* has *arbitrium*, but he has no *arbitrium* toward God and in respect of his salvation. He may direct his *voluntas* in that direction but it will be empty unless God in His *Arbitrium* gives Himself to man. For Luther, strictly speaking, only God has free-will,[45] for He only is the " I am that I am ". But quite as important as that is the fact that when the human *voluntas* is directed towards God it finds itself faced by criticism, by the divine judgment on sin; for as directed toward God the human *voluntas* is not an objectless (neutral) will but one that has self for its

object. There is really no such thing as an objectless will, an empty will. The will of the sinner is free, but it is determined by a usurped freedom which is itself sin. The fundamental imagination of man's heart, to use Luther's language again (here citing the Old Testament), is evil. Man is in bondage to evil already. The only other condition in which he can be, is in bondage to Grace—and as Luther points out that is the fundamental teaching of St. Paul in Romans vi. Strictly speaking therefore man has no *arbitrium* at all. In respect of lower things he is in bondage to sin, in respect of higher things he is the servant of righteousness, the bond-servant of Jesus Christ. He has no *arbitrium*, no power of self-disposal; he is a slave. What we moderns call phenomenal freedom is quite irrelevant to the discussion, and like Aquinas, most of the Schoolmen and the Reformers, Luther never dreamt of denying it.[46] The real difficulty then in the question of "free-will" is that when man directs his will toward God—and he must do so, because God refuses to forgo His claim over man—he finds it met with a negative on the part of God which really means that the human will instead of finding freedom is hardened in its self-will—this is the teaching of St. Paul in Romans i in regard to the revelation of the wrath of God, or in more particular terms, it is the effect of the Law.[47] The Law enslaves man all the more. It is thus impossible for man to dispose of himself from the side of self-will; it is impossible for him to appropriate redemption. He can only attempt that with a sinful will and that God must judge, else He were not Holy Love.[48]

Man has usurped his freedom, but as such he has imprisoned himself within himself.[49] As such he has fallen from God, and the very freedom which he usurped is now his very sin. That is why the Law when it comes presents the illusion: You ought, therefore you can! The "I can" provoked by the Law is itself sin[50]—and it is impossible through this "I can" to appropriate redemption, that is to say, to appropriate it by the basic power of sin! That is why the legal relation is treated by St. Paul as a sinful one.

It is really at this point that Reformed theology breaks most with the tradition of the Schoolmen—in its conception of evil. Under the influence of Plato, particularly from the time of Augustine, evil came to be regarded merely as defection from the good—it was something negative. That has been

followed by most modern theologians. It is only on such a shallow view of sin that the doctrine of universalism is possible.[51] Apart from what Professor Mackintosh used to call the surd-like quality of sin in thwarting the love of God, sin has a positive side inasmuch as it is done *before God*.[52] Like all our actions in regard to God sin is double-sided—it could only be one-sided if there were some neutral *interregnum* between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of evil! It is the holy resistance of God to sin that makes one of the constitutive factors of sin. If God did not resist evil, there would be no distinction between good and evil, for that would mean that God's nature was such that He did not care whether a man committed murder, for example, or not. On the other side of sin there is the wrath of God, what we experience subjectively as guilt. That means that a sin is not past and gone, but is as ineradicable as the immutable nature of God's holiness. Strictly speaking that applies to the sinner. Therefore man cannot undo his sin. He has no *arbitrium* even in repentance over it, for, as Denney argues, the reality of sin is not exhausted in what it is to him. It is real to God—so real that it meant the Cross. Just because it is real in the universe (not therefore something which in the last resort reduces itself to appearance to which all theories of evil as *defectio boni* must work out), just because it is real to God it is " beyond the sinner's control ".[53] The sinner has no more *arbitrium* than he has ability to eliminate the Law, for the Law worketh wrath: and that places salvation utterly out of his control. For that reason also man is in bondage, and just because the relationship of God to him is turned to criticism the dialectic of sin is apt to yield determinism.

Predestination means the action of God's Grace to man in spite of and apart from the Law (*χωρὶς νόμου*,[54] and therefore the " pre " in predestination!). Predestination means that God breaks through the impersonal bondage of sin and the Law, and confronts man in Jesus Christ. But just because it is the coming of Grace, the bringing of forgiveness binds man more than ever to his sin. In so far as God had forbearance over man's sin, the relation between man and God tended to be impersonal and to that extent neutral (!) but now God comes in Person to man and encounters him over the issue of sin. Just because God wants to forgive man, man must own up to it, and so we can say that while the Law makes man a sinner,

Grace makes man a far greater sinner.[55] Even in his sin and in his disobedience to God the sinner's relations with God are intensively personalised[56]—and that is as we shall see the meaning of rejection or damnation. The point I wish to establish here is the fact that man has no *arbitrium* over his sin and salvation just because it is objective as well as subjective, positive as well as negative; just because it means something to God as well as to man. But in spite of all that it means to God, and in spite of the fact that He judges it, He comes to redeem man and to deliver him from bondage. And an important element in that deliverance is the fact that God in Christ fulfils the Law and so apart from the Law comes to justify the ungodly. It is on that ground that Christ confronts man, with forgiveness on His lips; Man comes to know the truth and the truth makes him free. To return to other terminology here which may prove enlightening: here we have the irruption of Eternity into the bondage of time, the confrontation of Freedom with the sinner. And just because the sinner who is bound up in the bondage of this sinful world is now face to face with Eternity, he becomes for the first time free to decide for God. Confronted by eternity, he is as it were, in eternity! Or to make it even more picturesque, we might say that this confrontation takes him for the moment out of the bondage of time, out of the temporal-causal *continuum* where law operates; his fetters are severed and he is free. This is perhaps better stated in verse—for whether it is in the body or out of the body we cannot tell!—

> " It is out of time that my decision is taken
> If you call that decision
> To which my whole being gives entire consent."[57]

VI

To return to more concrete language, the personal encounter of Christ with forgiveness on His lips, singles out a man (cf. all the miracles), and gives him freedom to say " yes " or " no ". It must not be thought that this freedom is such that it can be pocketed; freedom is only possible face to face with Jesus Christ[58]—the mystery is—and this we shall never fathom—that such a man may commit the sin of Adam all over again. He may usurp that freedom, try to pocket it—but this usurped

freedom becomes his very sin, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. He becomes hardened.

There can be no doubt about it that when confronted with Jesus Christ man makes a decision—but that decision is also a double-sided act. When he decides, he finds that it has been decided already, and it is the divine decision that qualifies his decision and makes it what it is, faith IN GOD. His decision is made faith through the Object of faith to which faith conforms. The possibility and the character of will and of faith do not lie in themselves but in that to which they are directed and that which determines them in that direction. And so here we have real freedom for the first time, because we have will directed by its proper Object, Jesus Christ. When I talk about the Object of faith this is not in any sense to be understood as an impersonalisation of faith, for even here God is always Subject. But the astounding thing is that in Jesus Christ we do have the objectification of God, and without such an objectification we could not have faith in God nor freedom toward Him. It is the objectification of God that is the guarantee of our freedom, the Humanity of Christ which guarantees our humanity, and means the recreation of it. How Christ can be both Object and Subject here, how He can be both Man and God, that is the central fact of the Christian revelation which we can never hope to plumb, but this much we can say that it is the Incarnation of the Son of God that means the acute personalisation of all our relations with God Who is always Subject—but apart from this objectification of the Word before man, there would seem to be no possibility for the human mind or the human will to have freedom toward God, to have a will that was not empty but filled, and so directed into freedom. Just because Christ, the Object of faith and Christian freedom, is also Subject, man's faith and will both are determined by Him. This takes human knowledge of God and human freedom directed toward Him completely out of line with any other kind of knowledge and freedom.[89] Here God takes the initiative and though He uses as raw material our freedom and mind it is HE who gives them both determination and their shape, and makes them what they are. Apart from that they would not be what they are. This is much more so than in the case of evil where God acts critically toward man; here where God acts positively, it is the WORD of God which is supremely determinative—and man's freedom,

while real, is one subordinate to God's and only possible because it is determined by God's—that is creaturely freedom as distinguished from the freedom of the Creator.[60] It is here that fallen man is restored to the lost fellowship with God and regains the freedom of faith and love—only this time it is a filled freedom and a filled love inasmuch as it is in fellowship with Jesus Christ.

To understand that we must think of the meaning of the Cross. There Christ died for us. He did an act which we could not do and over which we have no *arbitrium*. Just because there He took our place, the Cross is the exposure of the claims of self-will; and when we are saved by it we know we have no competence whatsoever which we can align beside the Divine will of Grace. In the Cross we see Christ to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world. And in the Cross too we know that God has judged sin, and judged us all in Christ. Here therefore we have what we might call election and damnation in the first place, mercy and judgment. But the important thing to note here is that it is not election *or* damnation in the first place. In Christ we are all judged[61]—and in so far as Christ died for all, then are all dead—but in Him we are all chosen by God's Grace. It might be objected that one cannot talk of God's choice (nor of His rejection either) without holding also that His choice when made, necessarily fulfils itself. In other words foresight implies "predestination". But such an argument presupposes that time relations in regard to man do not hold with God, and that is just what the Incarnation denies.[62] To assert that would mean the evacuation of the whole of the Old Testament of its significance: the relation of promise to fulfilment. God wills to take us seriously as He made us, and so while we are all forgiven and therefore judged in Christ, God encounters us in Him acting upon us, in the midst of our human situation with its reactions and decisions, on the ground of the Cross by way of choice and rejection on persons.[63] What we have in the Cross we can describe this way. There we have on the one hand the self-giving of God to men. That is His Love and Grace. The Cross is for all men, and there God gives Himself to us in spite of our sin and in spite of the infinite cost which He undertook by Christ's taking our place. But the Love of God, His Self-giving, means the giving of GOD, of God Who asserts Himself to be God: I am that I am. The Self-giving of God entails

therefore the giving of the Self-asserting God even in Jesus Christ. God does not cease to be God in the Incarnation. He asserts the rights of His sovereignty and Holiness in Christ as much as in the Law, indeed, as we have seen, more so. God cannot give any other God than just that God to men. And so it is Grace, the complete Self-giving of God to men, that comprises at its heart God's judgment,[64] the Self-assertion of the divine Holiness over against sin. That is the God we accept in Christ on the Cross. And so we might call the result of the encounter of man with Christ, who died for all, election or damnation in the second place. And here we must say *OR* and not *AND*. "And" is the general word, but "OR" is the acute personalisation of the Cross toward men.[65] The Salvation of Christ free to all is given to man, but its very giving in forgiveness, brings sin to book, brings judgment, though just because it brings pardon. But that is the difficulty: the Offence of the Cross. Christ Himself is the stumbling-block. "Only when we are confronted by Him is there the possibility of being 'offended'. For there is no Other Who can force men to come to a decision about Him when they are confronted by Him. The Person about Whom it is imperative that we should make a decision, for or against faith, is the Mediator, the One before Whom, in Whom, we decide before God and in the presence of God."[66] That is why the possibility of election means the possibility of rejection, because the possibility of faith means also the possibility of being offended. When we are brought face to face with decision in this encounter, and answer No or disobey—and God does not allow us to be neutral —then we choose damnation in the second place, that is the Cross of Christ is our judgment only and not our salvation.[67] When we answer Yes or obey, then we learn that Christ has already answered for us! We are chosen already in Christ. We must say that both election and damnation are in Christ—man cannot damn himself any more than he can elect himself. What constitutes his disobedience damnation is the Cross itself. God's reaction against sin there receives its full weight, and when the sinner repudiates the Cross, he comes under the full weight of the judgment of God. In point of fact man probably never or only very rarely deliberately repudiates the Cross—he evades it and keeps on evading it until it is too late, but it amounts to the same thing in the end.

VII

At this point it might well be asked: But what is the precise relation between the divine decision and the human decision, between Eternity and time, between Subjective and the objective? What is the relation of Grace to human freedom? That is without doubt the final point we must answer—it would be foolish to think that we could answer it except in faith, but just because the only answer we can give is in faith, that means that no psychological explanation can be given—no more than there could be a Psychology of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Holy Spirit in fact Who constitutes the relation between the Divine decision and the human decision.[68] It might also be added that we can say nothing here in regard to the mystery of evil which by its very nature is beyond any explanation. Evil means discontinuity, such discontinuity as the Cross revealed there was between God and man. Just because it took an infinite act to redeem us, we see that the discontinuity of sin is infinite. In the words of Anselm, because sin is sin against the infinite majesty of God, it is infinite in guilt.[69] Hence no explanation—which proceeds only on the principle of continuity, explaining A in terms of B, B in terms of C, etc.—can cope with sin without explaining it away. Nor do we have any analogy here which can help us out, and so sin presents to the end a surd-like quality.[70] But in regard to election we do have an analogy—in the Person of Jesus Christ.[71] If Grace means the personal presence of God to men, then that means concretely, Jesus Christ. Therefore it is in the relation of the deity to the humanity in Jesus Christ that we are to look for our final answer to this question.

Christology must always be the *centrum* of a Christian dogmatic. If therefore it can be said that a systematic treatment of theology will be one in which all the doctrines cohere and dovetail together, as far as that is possible where we are dealing with the interpretation of Miracles, then we may look for certain material dogmatic norms within the body of theology which may act as a kind of interior logic throughout the whole, characterising as well the single doctrines themselves. Without doubt we find that in Christology,[72] or viewed from another angle one might well say it was the doctrine of Grace.[73] How God deals with us in Jesus Christ, that must be the norm for

all our theologising—and not least here in the doctrine of election.

Here in Jesus Christ faith tells us that we are confronted by God. Here we have very God and very Man, deity unimpaired by the presence of humanity, and humanity unimpaired by the presence of deity. In the words of Chalcedon,[74] the deity and humanity of Christ bearing upon each other are to be thought of as ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως. In other words, the eternal Word of God united Himself with the Man Jesus Who was created *ex virgine*, in such a way that there was an insoluble union between the two and yet one without any fusion between deity and humanity. Christological heresies have generally taken the form of transubstantiating, as it were, one side of the Person of Christ into the other. Thus for example the ancient docetic heresy transubstantiated the humanity into the divinity, while the ancient ebionite heresy transubstantiated the divinity into humanity. In other words, these heresies amount either to a divinising of humanity or a humanising of divinity. Each makes havoc of the Person of Christ, and each in the end passes over into the opposite.[75] In opposition to this, faith confesses the perfect humanity of Christ which is our guarantee that that God has actually come to MAN, and confesses the perfect deity of Christ which is our guarantee that we have to do with GOD. How does faith think of the connection between Christ's deity and His humanity? The answer is, Through the Holy Ghost. It is a downright miracle.[76] That really means that we cannot understand HOW it came about, though we may well understand much of what was involved. God was the actor in the Incarnation, and just because it was the result of a free decision on His part, the Incarnation is ultimately an incomprehensible act. God began with Himself, even in the act in which He descended into the midst of time and worldly continuity. That implies that Christ was not the product of worldly continuity—but nevertheless He was a real man, and no docetic figure. The Incarnation does not mean some kind of metaphysical union between divinity and humanity in general; it was personal (hypostatic); it was the union between the Word and a particular individual, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary. But that does not mean that Jesus as Man had any independent existence from the Word; He has no existence apart from the Incarnation.

His existence was grounded solely in the act of God, Who at that one point and at no other, has so come among men.

We must now proceed to draw the analogy. We can say that just as Jesus Christ was *vere homo et vere Deus*, so in the divine encounter we have a really human decision and a really divine one. The human decision has no independent existence apart from the divine, but nevertheless it is a particular and concrete decision; it is personal. How does sheer grace relate itself to the human decision? We must say that there can be no *linear* linking of Grace on to the moral personality (i.e. to "free-will") as such.[77] To use a German word, there can be no Anknüpfung (or Anschluss) on the part of the natural man. But Grace is a creative act within the midst of our worldly decisions and choices, and the human decision which corresponds to the divine decision is a truly human, worldly act. Following our criterion of the Incarnation we must say that Grace means the real personal Presence of God to man in such a way that the presence of perfect divinity (predestination) is unimpaired by the presence of humanity, and the presence of perfect humanity is unimpaired by the presence of perfect divinity. Now that is quite unthinkable for the natural reason which works with categories of the understanding (in the Kantian sense).[78] But Scripture does not think of these as being connected through cause and effect, but through a different kind of connection altogether created at the Incarnation, which we have come to call "hypostatic union". It is precisely the doctrine of election that embodies this. And here too we must say ἀχωρίστως and ἀσυγχύτως.[79] There can be no separation between the divine and the human decisions, nor on the other hand any fusion. Separation or fusion inevitably result in Pelagianism or determinism, which correspond respectively with a docetic and an ebionite Christology, on the one hand, or in a doctrine of mystic infused grace (Cf. Gregory of Nyssa espec. for this in relation to Christology) or a doctrine of synergism, which correspond respectively to a Eutychian and a Nestorian Christology, on the other hand. In point of fact, all of these tend to think of the relation of Grace to man not in the form of Word and faith but in the form of cause and effect, that is why each form of the heresy readily passes over into its opposite. In the end therefore these errors reduce themselves to two

main types in which the extremes are a doctrine of irresistible grace and independent free-will.[80]

In the experience of faith the man who has been chosen by God cannot say that he has chosen God, and yet the act of Grace means that for the first time man has been set free from the bondage of sin, and placed under God's claim for obedience. Just because Grace means the Self-bestowal of God to man, it entails the Self-affirmation of God, that is to say, it entails the bestowal of God Who asserts His will and nature to be sovereign claiming the obedience of faith. Thus it is Grace which is the power of obedience. And so it is Grace that really fulfils the Law; under it man is for the first time thrown upon full responsibility. We must say then that there is a kind of hypostatic union between Grace and faith, through the Holy Spirit, a kind of *communio quaedam consubstantialis!*[81] Faith has no independent existence apart from the initiative of Grace, nor is it in any sense the produce of human activity working independently of the Word. It is WE who believe, and we come to believe in a personal encounter with the living Word. Faith entails a genuine human decision, but at its heart there is a divine decision, which, as it were, catches up and makes it what it is, begotten of the Holy Ghost.

It is in the doctrine of the Virgin birth that we see this most clearly.[82] It was a real birth. The word became flesh, not through any synergistic activity, but a gracious decision on the part of God (*conceptus de Spiritu Sancto*). That implies that Jesus was not born because of the sovereignty (*arbitrium*) of man, not through the will of the flesh. Jesus was not a product of a causal historical continuity, nevertheless the Incarnation was a coming of God right into the midst of human conditions. Jesus was not created *ex nihilo*, but *ex virgine*, therefore right in the midst of human choices and decisions, right in the midst of human activity: *Ecce ancilla Domini*, but the Anknüpfung lies in the *conceptus de Spiritu Sancti*. And Jesus was no docetic figure; He was a real Man, and really the son of Mary. She gave birth to Him.

Nothing could make the relation between Grace and faith in election more clear. The ultimate act is incomprehensible because it is an act of GOD, that is why election is also predestination. But the divine decision " was made flesh ". That is what we have in faith, and just as in the birth of Jesus so in

the generation of faith natural processes are involved. In, under, and with the flesh—to use sacramental terminology—or the human decision, there is a divine decision, apart from which the human decision has no existence at all; indeed would never have been called into being. We have here therefore the repudiation of adoptianism, that is, correspondingly, Pelagianism.[83] The virgin birth means that the sovereignty of man (the κύριος) has no place. We have the repudiation of docetism, that is, correspondingly, determinism. That is not only seen in the fact that natural causation and generation were broken, but in the fact that Christ Jesus was a real Man. And so we must say with Luther: *Haereo in Christi humanitate. Nullum Deum cognoscendum esse, praeter hunc incarnatum et humanum Deum.*[84] Nor may we deny the " humanity " of faith in favour of some overriding force from above. We have here also the repudiation of Arianism, that is, correspondingly, synergism. There is no fusion between the two natures, no " Anknüpfungspunkt " (other than the Holy Spirit). There is therefore no *tertium quid* between the two, for while there are two natures, there is ONE PERSON. That Jesus Christ is really God guarantees to us that we have to do with GOD; that He is Man guarantees to us that God has come all the way to US. Predestination *in Christo* is the divine act of ἰδιοποίησις. And so ultimately we must say that it is the *unio hypostatica*[85] that supplies us with the necessary category for understanding the much debated relation between Election and human freedom, the Holy Spirit and faith, " Supernature " and " nature ".

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[1] Cf. for example the *Medulla Theologiae Christianae* of John Marck which was once used as a theological text-book in Scotland.

[2] J. Heidegger, *Corpus Theologiae*, 5.19.20—See Heppe, *Reformierte Dogmatik*, p. 108.

[3] Pictet, *Theologia Christiana*, 3.1.7: *Non distinguimus decretum ab ipsa Dei essentia.*

[4] The words of a 16th cent. Basler Theologian, Hyperius.

[5] Institutes 3.24.12 and 15, and also the tract *De Praedestinatione.*

[6] Institutes 3.21.1.

[7] Institutes 3.22.1; 24.5, etc.

[8] See Heppe, op. cit., p. 137.

[9] Peter van Mastricht, ibid.

[10] Polan apparently following Augustine, ibid.

[11] Institutes 3.24.5; and *De Praedestinatione*, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 8, 306, 318.

[12] Institutes 3.22.1: *Si gratiam Dei, ut idonei ad gloriam futurae vitae obtinendam reddamur, praecedit electio, quid iam reperiet in nobis Deus ipse quo ad nos eligendos.* Of the reformers it was Zwingli who was most, Luther least, guilty here.

[13] See Heppe, op. cit., p. 137, and Heidegger, op. cit. p. 31 f.

[14] Calvin, Institutes, 3.21.1–3.
The last phrase suggests the influence of Nicolas of Cusa on Calvin on this point!

[15] This is the view of the Scots Confession, articles 7 and 8. See the Gifford Lectures of Karl Barth, p. 68 f.

[16] I think the expression originally may be Brunner's, but see also Karl Barth, *Dogmatik* 2/1, p. 419. Hendry cites a similar word from Luther: " Gottes Wille hat kein Warumbe " (God the Creator, p. 141), but this need not be the same. It might be interpreted in a nominalist sense.

[17] Cf. The thesis of A. Nygren in his book *Agape and Eros*. Cf. also Brunner's book *Eros und Liebe*.

[18] Cf. Polanus: *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae : Praedestinatio est pars providentiae.*

[19] See *Theologische Existenz Heute*, 47: Karl Barth, *Gottes Gnadenwahl*, p. 4 f.

[20] *The Letters of Martin Luther*, translated by M. A. Currie, p. 462; cf. also the letter written to a stranger in 1528 on the same subject, p. 177 f.

[21] Cf. *Theologische Studien*, 5: Karl Barth: *Die Souveranität des Wortes Gottes und die Entscheidung des Glaubens.*

[22] See the more recent publication of Brunner: *Wahrheit als Begegnung*, which is really an essay on this point.

[23] Luther says: *Verbum, inquam, et solum verbum est vehiculum gratiae*, " *Luthers Werke* ", Weimar Edition, 2, p. 509.

[24] Cf. Brunner: " The idea of God never offends anyone," *Mediator*, p. 340. In this respect it is the theology which stresses the immanence of God which keeps Him at a distance; it is the theology which sees that there is no immanence but the immanence of the Transcendent (P. T. Forsyth's words), that is really personal. The question of transcendence is apt to be fundamentally misunderstood in the modern theological debate as something metaphysical. If transcendence is to be metaphysically interpreted, then there can be no transcendence

except the transcendence of the immanent, which does not make much sense! We shall have to recall that in the Bible Transcendence is fundamentally religious—it has to do with the Holiness of God and the sin of man. That is evident not only from the Biblical doctrine of Holiness which entails " separation " but from all those parables of Jesus which speak of " the far country " whether on the part of a prodigal or on the part of a householder. The Bible does not in the last resort make the distinction between the Creator and the creature the ground for a doctrine of *finitum non capax infiniti*, because of its insistence on Grace. But just because it does insist on grace, it teaches also the doctrine *finitum non capax infiniti*—but that must be understood as an " also "! However, if it is the emphasis on the Holiness of God and the sin of man that gives the Bible its emphasis on Transcendence, it is the astounding fact that " Christ was made sin for us " that emphasises, as nothing else does, the real immanence of God. It is liberal theology which refuses to take this thought of the identification of God in Christ with human sin seriously that must be charged with a false transcendence. And so in the last resort it is the humanity of Christ, the Incarnation of *God*, that brings Him so near, near to sinful man, inasmuch as He was " made in the likeness of sinful flesh ". But it is only a Transcendent God, i.e. a God of Grace, who can do that!

[15] The sinner feels that God relates Himself to man objectively and not Subjectively. That is also apparent in the legalistic relationship to God. Both legalism and determinism are characteristics of fallen man, of man who lives in abstraction from God. But the sinner is apt to interpret this deistically, that is, give this an ontological interpretation. However, the Old Testament (and so also the New) knows of no such separation between " nature " and " supernature ", and so knows no determinism, and in the last resort no real legalism—for, as St. Paul argues in Galatians, it is the Law misinterpreted, that is repudiated by the Gospel of Grace, not the Law in itself. But there is real ground for this legalistic-deterministic thinking, because God does act critically upon the sinner outside Christ. That is why Luther repudiated natural theology not on metaphysical grounds, but on the ground of the doctrine of the wrath of God. There IS a natural theology, just because man's relation to God is abstracted, and that natural theology is bound to be deistic—even when it tries to overcome the deism by a secret doctrine of *analogia entis*—but *justificatio impii sola gratia et sola fide* must mean its rejection *in toto*, just as much as it entails the rejection of all natural goodness—and there IS a natural goodness.

[26] See here Jacobs: *Prädestination und Ethik bei Calvin*, and also Barth: *Evangelium und Gesetzt, Theologische Existenz Heute*, 32. Cf. Brunner's oft repeated expression, Gottes verantwortlich machendes Wort, See Natur und Gnade, Der Mensch im Widerspruch, Wahrheit als Begegnung, etc.

[27] Cf. *The World and God*, by Prof. H. H. Farmer, especially Ch. 4.

[28] Cf. Brunner: *Wahrheit als Begegnung:* "Nicht das Substantiv, sondern das Verbum ist der biblischen Sprache das Hauptwort. Die altchristliche Theologie hat aus der biblischen Verbum—Theologie eine griechische Substantiv—Theologie gemacht. Das ist das platonische substantialistische Element in ihr. Die Bibel ist nie substantialistisch, sondern immer aktualistisch."

[29] See Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, p. 291.

[30] I refer mainly to his little book, *Ich und Du*, translated by R. G. Smith. However, as an orthodox Jew, Buber is unable to solve the fundamental problem, the solution of which is to be found in the Incarnation. Instead he is forced to take refuge in mysticism, which is in fact, only a half-way house to determinism.

[31] Cf. Luther: "*De Servo Arbitrio*," 93; *Omnipotentiam vero Dei voco, non illam potentiam, qua multa non facit, quae potest, sed actualem illam, qua potenter omnia in omnibus, quomodo Scriptura vocat eum omnipotentem.* But even Luther wanted to equate omnipotence with foresight.

[32] Cf. Calvin, Institutes 2.23.1: ipsa electio nisi reprobationi opposita non staret. In German this is sometimes called the Meyer-Müller Theorie.

[33] This is one of the major contentions of Luther against Erasmus throughout the *De Servo Arbitrio.* Luther accuses Erasmus himself of trying to be the "slippery eel".

[34] This is the logical conclusion of the doctrine of predestination which operates with an impersonal view of Grace. That is why some form of extreme Augustinianism will always reappear in Catholicism. The same result is seen in the doctrines of baptismal regeneration and the *ex opere operato* view of the sacraments.

[35] This can be viewed as parallel to the argument of the neo-Hegelians such as Strauss, and Bauer, and Biedermann, from the intrinsic imperfection of personality as we know it to an impersonal God. Cf. also B. Bosanquet.

[36] This has also been a note of traditional Calvinism. Cf. espec. Heidegger, op. cit., 5.8. However, it was not radically thought out. Election is referred to the Son propter sponsionem pro electis, and the Holy Spirit propter obsignationem eorundem.

Bucan seems to go a little further when he says: Causa princeps electionis—Deus—et Christus, quia non est alius Deus a Patre —et Spiritus Sanctus. Institutiones, 36.16.

[37] Again cf. Brunner: "Gott überrennt den Menschen nicht, er setzt den menschlichen Willen, die Personentscheidung nicht auser Kraft, sondern er nimmt sie in Anspruch. Gott ist der Herr—er ist nicht Kausalität." Wahrheit als Begegnung, p. 74.

[38] This distinction is not taken seriously enough by most modern theologians. If Creator means one who creates ex nihilo, how can a Creator create creators? A Creator is One without origin. To talk of his having been created is simply a contradictio in adiecto. It is another thing to talk of "creativity", but even then we must recognise that the word is used somewhat loosely. Cf. Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., p. 288 f.

[39] Luther says: "Grace comes so free, that no thought concerning it, or attempt or desire after it, precedes." *De Servo Arbitrio*, 155.

[40] Cf. Barth: "Dass der Mensch ein begnadeter Mensch ist, das hat er sich nicht selbst genommen." *Gottes Gnadenwahl*, p. 9.

[41] What theologians have recently called "Einmaligkeit".

[42] For example the controversy between supra- and infralapsarianism. It is sometimes objected to an "absolute particular" doctrine of predestination which claims to come down on the one side or the other, that if salvation is eternally determined, what sense is there in saying that it took place before or after the Fall. But that objection operates on a view of eternity for which the distinctions of time are unreal and docetic, which is even a worse fault than the view of the controversialists who, however distorted their views of eternity and time may have been, did see that time had significance for eternity! It might also be added here that the traditional debate has also suffered from the disability to distinguish between a *totum simul* view of eternity, and a *per se* one. The latter is the Biblical one. The former can only be accepted with certain restrictions.

[43] By some critics a doctrine of predestination is linked with what is called "sheer transcendentalism", but such a charge is the opposite of the truth. Just because predestination is "transcendentalist" it entails a new time, a new world. That charge is nowhere more false than when directed against the so-called dialectical theologians, and in particular Barth. More than any other modern theologian, Barth has taken time seriously, and refused to allow its distinctions to be overridden or made unreal by an abstract immanentism. And he has done

that just because he has taken the humanity of Christ so seriously. It is rather significant that those theologians who start off by being Ebionite in their Christology—Cf. Schleiermacher and Harnack, to name only two—almost inevitably end up in docetism! For Barth's discussion of eternity and time see the *Dogmatik* 1/2, p. 50 ff. and 2/1, p. 685 ff.

[44] See Hendry, op. cit., p. 139. Luther, however, cannot be absolved of the suspicion of determinism. It is significant that that suspicion is never aroused in his less formal writings.

[45] "Free-will is plainly a divine term, and can be applicable to none but the Divine Majesty only: for He alone 'doth (as the Psalm sings) what He will in Heaven and earth'. Whereas, if it be ascribed unto men, it is not more properly ascribed, than the divinity of God himself would be ascribed unto them: which would be the greatest of all sacrilege. Wherefore, it becomes theologians to refrain from the use of this term altogether, whenever they wish to speak of human ability, and to leave it to be applied to God only." 36. Luther's argument is that free-will is something that acts *per se*. Therefore toward God one cannot think of man as having free-will, though one may well think of it toward things lower than man. But the more important point Luther does not fail to see, that if man has free-will, can do what he likes, that implies that at bottom he is good, at any rate intrinsically good enough to be able to create the right relationship with God. That the Cross denies.

[46] See the *De Servo Arbitrio*, 26, 41, 161, etc. Luther even attributes freedom to man in respect of "good works" (not toward God) and "the righteousness of the civil or the moral law", 146. For the view of Augustine see the fine discussion by Heinrich Barth: *Die Freiheit der Entscheidung im Denken Augustins*. For the view of Aquinas see espec. *Summa Theol.* c I a–II ae. q. 10: a 4 ad. 3; *Contra Gen.* 3.72. For the Calvinist position see Wolleb, *Compendium*, 19: *Necessitas decretorum Dei non tollit libertatem in creaturis rationalibus. . . . Nec tollit contingentiam in causis secundis.* Cf. also Beza, *Opera* I, 1, 2. Kant who inherited this thought pushed it to the logical conclusion and denied phenomenal freedom, but then had to assert noumenal freedom to escape from determinism, for the denial of phenomenal freedom meant the denial of natural theology!

[47] It might be argued—as it is to-day in Judaism, and was even in the time of St. Paul—that the giving of the Law is an act of Grace, and the possession of the Law is the guarantee of election! There is truth in that. God does give Himself in the Law, and the Law includes the gift of God; but just

because the gift means the giving of the Holy God to the SINNER, the gift is neutralised, for man cannot receive it. That is the argument of St. Paul. The Law was meant for life, but in point of fact it destroys. There is no way through Law to Grace, or in modern terminology, through moral values to religion. Because of sin the Law can only have negative significance, it hedges man up to Grace, it brings a "glad despair" as Kierkegaard called it.

[48] This is even more the case because of God's positive action of redemption. Just because Christ has died for us, that means He has taken our redemption out of our hands and placed it in His alone. Thus Luther: "God has put my salvation out of the way of my will, and has taken it under His own, and has promised to save me, not according to my working or manner of life, but according to His own grace and mercy." (*De Servo Arbitrio* 164—this is the way to understand Rom. ix. 15, 16.) Cf. also the argument in the conclusion: "If we believe that Christ redeemed us by His blood, we are compelled to confess, that the *whole* man was lost."

[49] Cf. Luther's doctrine of the cor incurvatum in se.

[50] This of course is really a delusion when it means that man is able of himself to create the right relationship toward and with God. Thus Luther argues throughout against Erasmus that the Law does not tell men what they can do, but only what they ought to do, in fact what they cannot do. There are very clear statements in the 1535 seq. *Disputationes: Non ergo liberum arbitrium tam a facto esse, quam a debito esse dicitur. . . . A debere ad posse non valet consequentia.*

[51] This applies as well to the repudiation of belief in a devil. If evil is only negative, how can pure evil, i.e. pure negativity, exist? The retort to be made to this—as foolish as is this argument itself!—is, if evil is simply negative, how can it exist at any time? If it can only exist because tied together by some "good", then is not that "good" doubly evil, on the ground of prostitution, because it preserves evil? If not, how can anything be negative, without having enough positive weight in itself to negate? If it is negative in the sense that O is negative, then that means that evil does not exist at all! The *defectio boni* view of evil ignores the elementary logical distinction between the *contrary* and the *contradictory*.

[52] This is one of the great contributions of Kierkegaard to modern theology. See *Kierkegaard*, by W. Lowrie, p. 413.

[53] The Missionary Motive, in the volume, *Missionary Sermons*, 1812 *to* 1924, *p.* 235.

[54] Rom. iii. 21.

[55] See Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, p. 399. That is why Luther

tells us that only by faith can a man be a sinner! Sola fide credendum esse peccatores . . . est enim non naturalis. He even says, rarum et arduum est peccatorem fieri—on Rom. iii. 5 f. " Whatsoever is not of faith is sin ", said St. Paul. That is what we are always tending to forget. Sin and grace have been converted, practically without remainder, into anthropological affairs—e.g. in the theology of Tennant. But the doctrine of sin no more than the doctrine of grace can be naturalised.

[56] I suppose that is the reason why the most forceful personalities in human society are either the saints or the great sinners.

[57] T. S. Elliot, *Murder in the Cathedral* (F. & F.), p. 73. In this fine play there are many interesting theological suggestions.

[58] It has been the main fault of the debate over the *imago dei*, to think of it as something permanent or that could be made permanent. That is to misunderstand the nature of God first before it misunderstands the *imago Dei*. The imago really consists of a *relation* to God. That is why it can be utterly lost, and yet man can still retain the *humanum*. The *imago dei* is in no sense a *proprietas* which he has once and for all. It is rather the reflection of the glory of God which we attain in fellowship with Him—that is, through the Word, through Christ. See 2 Cor. iii. 18. We can only think of freedom in the same sense. Freedom and the image of God are to be thought of only as correlative to Grace.

[59] Thus Brunner also in *Wahrheit als Begegnung*, p. 62 f.: " Das Gegenüber ist nicht mehr wie im Denken ein Etwas, ein Bedachtes und Besprochenes, das ich mir durch die Energie meines Denkens erschliesse, sondern eine Person, die selbst spricht und sich erschliesst, die also selbst die Initiative und Führung hat und sozusagen die Rolle übernimmt, die beim Denken ich selbst habe. Es findet also hier Wechsel, eine Vertauschung statt, die im Gebiet des Denkens völlig analogielos ist." That is the thesis of Kierkegaard so brilliantly argued in the Philosophical Fragments.

[60] This applies even to the *non posse peccare* freedom, which as such need NOT be divine, though it cannot be had apart from God.

[61] It is usual to think here of the cry of our Lord on the Cross: " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? " Cf. Luther here on Gal. iii. 13.

[62] We must remember also that God has made His own (περιποιήσαι) our humanity which He has taken up for ever into the Godhead. That—so astounding to us—must mean that time relations even mean something for God Himself Who

has so stooped to share our humanity. To Platonise this, as the Alexandrians were wont, not excepting Athanasius, is in the end to anthropologise God, which the Incarnation does not do, for God has become man without ceasing to be God.

[63] See Camfield, *Revelation and the Holy Spirit*, p. 92.

[64] Cf. Barth, *Dogmatik*, 2/1, p. 394 f., 413 f. and also I/2, p. 845 "Nur durch Gottes Gnade sind wir wirklich gerichtet"; p. 433 ff.

[65] The failure to understand this is the meaning of universalism. In the last resort universalism means an impersonal relation between God and man, and as such it is at heart deterministic. We can hope that all men will be saved, but further than that we cannot go.

[66] Brunner, *The Mediator*, p. 341.

[67] What happened in the case of the Law, will happen here. The Cross ordained to life, becomes a man's condemnation. In Christ God still gives Himself to the sinner, even if he disobeys; Christ's death is for all men. But to the unrepentant sinner, that giving of God only means the proximity of Holiness and therefore judgment. It is Hell for an unrepentant sinner to be faced with the Cross. That is why we must say that even damnation or rejection is *in Christo*.

[68] See again Camfield, op. cit., p. 91 f.

[69] Cur Deus Homo.

[70] Luther says toward the end of the *De Servo Arbitrio*: *In lumine gratiae est insolubile, quomodo Deum eum damnet, qui non potest aliud ullis suis viribus facere quam peccare et reus esse.*

[71] It was Augustine who first thought of the Incarnation as the prototype of Grace. *De Praedestinatione*, 15, 30–31; Cf. Calvin, *Institutio*, 3.22.1; Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.* 3 Q 2.10; and a modern R.C. exposition by Penido, *Le Rôle de L'Analogie en Théologie Dogmatique* p. 378 f.

[72] By this I do not mean to exclude soteriology, for the Person of Christ can only be rightly interpreted *functionally*. *Hoc est Christum cognoscere, beneficia eius cognoscere.* It is very significant that in the book, *Wahrheit als Begegnung*, Brunner is concerned to correct a fault of The Mediator where he feels he has interpreted the person of Christ too *inductively*. See p. 108 f. (Professor Brunner expressed the same thought in conversation with me two years ago.) This means, apparently, that Brunner is coming nearer to Barth!

[73] Luther put the doctrine of justification by faith in the centre. "For all the other articles of the faith are comprehended in it: and if that remain sound, then all the rest are sound. When we teach that men are justified by Christ, that Christ is the conqueror of sin, death, and the everlasting curse,

we witness therewithal that He is naturally and substantially God." On Gal. iii. 13. This really amounts to the same thing, with very heavy weight on the function of Christ.

[74] Chalcedon of course represents only prolegomena to Christology, but perhaps that is all that can be said!

[75] That is apparent even more in modern Christology. For example, think of the way many theologians talk of Christ as the Divine Man. In that way they hope to have divinity and yet still retain the humanity of Christ—think of the whole Ritschlian movement whose major problem is to pass from Jesus to God. They can only do that by the doctrine of the Divine Man. But to call Jesus a Divine Man is to deny his humanity. In the last resort liberalism becomes docetic. It transubstantiates Christ into an eternal idea (Cf. Schleiermacher). It is significant that R.C. theology has never got rid of these early heretical tendencies. That is particularly apparent in three ways: (1) In the virtual denial of the complete mediatorial work of Christ, (2) In the doctrine of Grace as a kind of *tertium quid* between God and man joining them together, corresponding to an Arian Christology, (3) And the doctrine of transubstantiation in the sacrament, which means that the presence of Christ there is docetic. To transubstantiate the worldly symbols into something they are not, is virtually to deny the humanity of Christ, and to say that God has not come all the way to our world.

[76] "*Etsi in unam personam coaluit immensa Verbi essentia cum natura hominis, nullam tamen inclusionem fingimus. Mirabiliter enim e caelo descendit Filius Dei ut caelum tamen non relinqueret; mirabiliter in utero virginis gestari, in terris versari et in cruce pendere voluit, ut semper mundum impleret sicut ab initio.*" Calvin, *Institutio*, 2.13.4.

[77] The moral personality is as such sinful, and free-will is as such self-will. Grace has to do with the moral personality, but it sets it in crisis and judges it.

[78] For an interesting view of causality here see Karl Heim, *God Transcendent*, p. 16 f.

[79] It is ἀσυγχύτως which reflects the greatest temptation in theology, apparent in every Greek interpretation of the Logos—cf. espec. the Archbishop of York. But it says most emphatically, No *analogia entis!* The relation between the deity and humanity of Christ cannot be thought of in any ontological way, but only in a sacramental way. Even in the Incarnation God remains God, and man man—and yet the miracle is that there is one Person. But there is no fusion between the deity and the humanity of Christ in such a way that it would be possible to pass automatically from the one

to the other. No one simply by being clever can see God in Jesus Christ. "No man says Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." The doctrine of *analogia entis* applied to Christology inevitably means the humanisation of God—therefore ἀσυγχύτως! Similarly a doctrine of *analogia entis* in Grace and election inevitably means synergism or determinism. It is just because the only analogia we may use is an analogia fidei, that we can still talk analogically—and we cannot talk of God apart from analogies—and anthropomorphically, without humanising God. This analogia fidei we find in the Person of Christ, Who is the only point (the only Anknüpfungspunkt therefore!) where God and man come indissolubly together. It is only in the God-Man that *we* can get through to God; and we only by becoming conform to that analogy (*imago Dei!*) in faith.

[80] It is the *damnosa hereditas* of R.C. theology that it operates with a view of Grace which is thought of as the outflow of the nature of God rather than of His free personal decision. Such an immanentist grace always entails cause and effect. Cf. especially the doctrine, *gratiam causare ex opere operato*. That fault is not eliminated either by Przywara's attempt to find a mediating position in which the *analogia entis* is thought of as completing its work in transforming the problem of antitheses into the problem of tensions (see *Polarity*, p. 64), nor by von Hügel's attempt to elaborate a view of alternation between nature and supernature.

[81] Here at any rate the Latin word is not so happy as the Greek. Indeed throughout I should say that "*substantia*" as applied to the personal, at least as regards man, for example in the famous Boethian definition of personality, is a fundamental mistake. Only God's Personality can be *substantia*.

[82] See the magnificent statement of Barth, Dogmatik, 1/2, p. 187 ff.

[83] Corresponding to Pelagianism ought to be added also all the heresies against which the Chalcedonians levelled their words ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως. That includes most two nature theories.

[84] On Gal. i. 13 f.

[85] This of course applies also to the doctrine of the sacraments, where we can allow no transubstantiation nor fusion, to the relation between the Word of God and the word of man, revelation and reason (in faith), the Church as the body of Christ and yet as the communio sanctorum, and so indeed probably throughout the whole of the Christian dogmatic.

A NOTABLE TERCENTENARY

"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."—Matt. xxii. 21.

(Sermon Preached in Brighton Presbyterian Church, Nov. 3, 1940).

To-DAY is a great and glorious anniversary in English history. Precisely three hundred years ago, on the 3rd of November, 1640, the Long Parliament met. Securely did that Parliament lay the foundations of the civil and religious liberty which we treasure, and for which to-day we are fighting.

For almost a dozen years England had been despotically ruled by Charles I, advised in matters of State by the Earl of Strafford, who summed up his totalitarian policy in the one word "Thorough", and in Church matters by Archbishop Laud, who aimed at a rigid state-imposed uniformity in the church. It was by no means unlike what exists in some countries to-day; prisons were full, informers flourished, appeals to impartial courts were disallowed.

This Long Parliament is the most famous in English history. Why? Not for the length of its sittings; not even because it executed Charles, for that it did not do. In December 1648, Colonel Pride, with a band of soldiers, turned out by force 143 members, and left what was scornfully and justifiably called "the Rump". This Rump Parliament it was which appointed a court to try the king. No:—the place of the Long Parliament in English history is due to the immovable stand it took for government by law, and not by dictatorship, and for liberty from ecclesiastical tyranny.

Yet the true secret of its greatness lies deeper still. Never in our history has there been a parliament so deliberately determined that its policy should be in accord with the will of God, and so desirous to understand that will. Year after year, on the last Wednesday of each month, it held a Fast Day; on that day the members went to St. Margaret's, Westminster to pray and

to hear two sermons, one morning and one afternoon. These sermons are remarkable for the fact that they concern themselves first and foremost with personal religion, with readiness to serve God in individual lives; only at the end do they come to the special responsibilities and duties of the hearers as members of parliament. From these sermons and from other sources as well, one learns the fact that there was a volume of earnest and spontaneous prayer throughout the land for the deliberations of parliament; the preachers claimed that this fact both added to the responsibility and helped the determination of the members.

It is but little remembered what were the first words spoken in debate in this Long Parliament. Yet they were most memorable; their significance is weighty; they struck indeed the key-note of its greatness. After the election of the Speaker, and the transaction of some formal business, Sir Benjamin Rudyerd rose, and said, "Mr. Speaker, we are here to do God's business and the king's." "God's business and the king's"! Sir Benjamin was no genius, not even a man of much force of character, but in that dozen of words he minted an immortal definition for the policy of a Christian parliament.

The task was no simple one, nor was it easy: the time came when they found it impossible to do both God's business and the king's. Yet, in the midst of civil war, they accepted a remarkable definition of a constitutional monarchy, probably the first that ever found place in any state document. It was drawn up by Alexander Henderson, a Scottish Presbyterian minister: every member (save those who had gone off to the king at Oxford) solemnly swore to it. "We shall endeavour," they swore, "with our estates and lives, to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliament, and the liberties of the kingdom; and to preserve and defend the king's Majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdom, that the world may bear witness with our consciences of our loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his Majesty's just power and greatness." This was honestly tried, with a pathetically sincere and persevering attempt to find in Charles the making of a constitutional monarch, an ideal that no Stuart was able to fulfil.

But it has been fulfilled in England in a way which has

astonished the world, and which became an example to other nations, never seriously challenged until the rise of totalitarian dictatorships after the Great War. It is admitted by historians that it was the Christianity of England, poor though that was, which in contrast to the infidelity of France saved our land from the horrors of the French Revolution. We stood firm, alone, against the huge aggression of Napoleon. There is one great distinction between him and the aggressor of to-day, Napoleon declared explicitly, " My authority ends where the authority of conscience begins ". Hitler would scorn any such dictum.

Once again it is our lot to try and do God's business and the king's; we must stand undaunted in our obedience to Christ's command, " Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's ". For Christ recognised that there were things that were Caesar's. How like His constant practice was this reply! The first half of it was enough to confound His adversaries, the inscription on the coin was a complete answer to their question. But He always enunciated great principles; and the second part of His reply was like a two-edged sword, dividing even unto the bone and the marrow. It dared them, so to speak, to give Caesar too much.

In His saying there is implicit Paul's declaration, " Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God ". Christians are not anarchists; they are revolutionaries only in a moral and not a political sense. Does Paul's doctrine seem to imply that Christians are to give an immoral acquiescence to any despotism, however debased, that may curse our world? Men have emphasised the fact that when Paul wrote this, Nero was on the throne. But Christ's formula makes absolutely clear that obedience has limits. Christianity preaches obedience, not civil disobedience; the limit of obedience arrives when the commands of man are contrary to the word of God. If we render unto God all that belongs to Him, there may come a time when we find that we cannot render unto Caesar all that he claims.

It is worth quoting the careful and unhesitating words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, drawn up by authority of the Long Parliament, and used by English-speaking Presbyterian churches to-day. " God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under Him

over the people, for His own glory, and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil-doers. . . . It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay their tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience sake. Infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him." This is a sound statement of Christ's principle, " Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

What about the other half? The German evangelical Church has gone as far as it dare in obeying the state; but there came a point when some of them dare go no further. They dare not hold their peace about the persecution of the Jews; they dare not refrain from preaching a gospel of love. They are in prison for it. Japanese Christians have had a problem to face which is precisely the same as the early Christians had to face in the Roman Empire; they would be at liberty to worship as they liked, if they would offer but one little pinch of incense on the altar of the emperor-god. But that was not Caesar's to have; they refused it, and they died for their refusal. In Japan the government has tried to quiet the consciences of the Christians by declaring that the ceremony they demand has no religious element, but is purely a state recognition of the emperor, even though it must be done at an idol shrine. Some have accepted this as absolving their consciences; but the Church is naturally uneasy. In Scotland in the " killing time ", men were imprisoned and executed because they would not swear unlimited allegianceto Charles II. They were willing to do so, if they might add words to the effect that it did not encroach on their allegiance to God.

What has this, you say, to do with us here in England to-day? Well, it is true that we enjoy religious liberty; and on this 3rd of November we should remember the Long Parliament whose debates began with the words, " Mr. Speaker, we are here to do God's business and the king's ". It has been said, " The price of liberty is eternal vigilance "; and it is against one of the most powerful attempts of the devil to rob us of that hard-won right that we are fighting to-day. Totalitarianism and religious liberty cannot live together in the same land, perhaps not even upon the same globe. " All for the state " is the cry

of Nazis, of Fascists, of Bolshevists, and of Japanese militarists. The Church must fly at masthead her pennon, " Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's ". Some vessels of her fleet may have to go down with the flag flying; but the fleet is bound to be victorious if all refuse to strike the flag to the enemy.

" The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Here in Britain, when we have won the war, we must still watch, lest by carelessness we fritter away our liberty. We may be in the happy position that the law of the land claims no obedience that we cannot readily give. There is another more subtle tyrant, the law of custom, to whom we may have to refuse our conformity. The acorn of liberty, planted by the Long Parliament, has grown to be so sturdy an oak that it is difficult to imagine a storm that could uproot it. Yet it might decay and die if it be not sound at heart.

It is the little things that we must watch; there are innumerable details in daily life, in our social relations, which seem so unimportant. Let me give you two examples, which are to the point precisely because many of you will think of them as trivialities. A man who is convinced that alcohol is a bad thing for him and for others, and who knows that his example tells, does not ordinarily take it. Yet on social occasions, such for example as a wedding, he takes it. He deludes himself by saying, " I desire freedom to do so "; but he is in fact a slave to custom, and is giving to that Caesar just the one little pinch of incense to which he has no claim. Or the man who stays away from service because his friends drop in to tea on a Sunday afternoon, and he does not like to say that he has an appointment which he must keep. He is rendering to the Caesar of social custom an hour which is God's. It was quaintly said three hundred years ago, " The cry of our age is for liberty so much that the most are for God's enclosures to be made commons". No:—render unto God that which is God's.

Other Caesars there are who may make difficulties for us, when peace comes. Our government may be swayed over much by a wrong patriotism, thinking of the world-importance of our own country, rather than of its world-usefulness. To the Caesar of imperialistic ideas we must not sacrifice; " The Kingdom of God is the only thing that can make patriotism good for the world ".

In a real sense, in such a democracy as ours, the duty of rendering to God the things that are His makes it incumbent on every Christian to take a steady interest in politics. For the one final solution of the problem would be that at which with magnificent courage the Long Parliament aimed, to make Caesar's demands the same as those of God. By the influence of the Church of Christ, the state should be enabled to enact laws expressing such a care for the estates, bodies, and souls of men as a true brother would have for his brother: laws which would make not cold justice, but kindly mutual help, the foundation of its citizens' relations one to another.

That should be our political ideal; but till the two regions coincide, if ever they shall do so, let us remember that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, and let us faithfully do God's business and the king's, rendering unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.

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BOOK REVIEWS

LAW AND LOVE[1]

THIS is a very lively book, marked by clarity and distinction of style. It is a vigorous protest against the morality which is governed by considerations of duty and social convention and which fails to give love the central and dominant place which it holds among the graces. A strong protest is called for. God is Love, and man was created by Him in and for love. Our Lord, followed by His Apostles, made love the supreme virtue, and the person whose heart does not overflow with love to God and man has missed the meaning and power of the Gospel.

It might be expected that a book written in praise of love and professing to follow the teaching of Christ should receive nothing but commendation in a Christian magazine. But there is much in this book which is bound to be distasteful to many who know something of the life of love through having accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Its historical summaries, some of which are excellent and some grossly one-sided or even entirely false, must be passed over in this review which is to concern itself with the main thesis of the book.

On the very first page we are met by the statement that Jesus "exposed the badness not merely of good men but of goodness itself" and the third chapter is entitled "The Badness of Goodness". Though it is easy to see that Professor Jessop here means by goodness *what sometimes passes* for goodness, a protest must be lodged against this profanation of the sacred words *good* and *goodness*. Never once are they used in this sinister sense by our Lord or by the Bible anywhere. There *good* and *goodness* are always the polar opposites of *bad* and *badness*. The debasement of the currency of great moral terms is to be strongly deprecated.

In case it may be thought that this is merely a matter of terminology, it must be said that the flaw in the book goes deeper than that. The flaw in language derives from a flaw in

[1] *Law and Love*. By T. E. Jessop. (S.C.M.) 6*s*. net.

thought. Professor Jessop pleads for a qualified Antinomianism. Were we to say that his teaching here is dangerous, he would agree. But what we do say is that his teaching is not true to that upon which he professes to build, viz. the teaching of Jesus. When did Jesus ever say or suggest that love "blurs the distinction of right and wrong" (p. 57)? On p. 184 it is asserted that the morality of duty and the morality of love are "disparate". But how can this be, when it is so plain in the teaching of Jesus that the morality of love *fulfils* the morality of duty? This fulfilment takes place when love takes up duty into itself, transfiguring and hallowing it in the embrace. But this could never happen if love and duty were disparate. Professor Jessop isolates love in a way which is foreign and opposed to the whole tenor of the New Testament. He fails to reckon seriously with the fact that the love which is at the heart of the Gospel is always *holy* love, and that the love which is God's gift to believing hearts is holy too. The Professor complains that some modern commentators are too keen on the distinction between Agape and Eros. But this same distinction is a vital one in the pages of the New Testament. It is significant that in the book under review Agape and Nomos are disparate, while Agape and Eros are only different stages of the same thing. The New Testament does not disparage natural love, but it treats Agape as something quite new, as new as the Gospel itself.

The blurring of the marches between good and evil arises from an even more serious blurring. Professor Jessop blurs the marches between God and man. His theme is ethical, but his doctrinal position reveals itself occasionally as in the following words: "When Jesus said that God is love He implied that God is perfectly human, and when He beckoned us to the life of love He meant that we can become imperfectly divine" (p. 56). The best thing to do with such a statement is simply to deny it.

It is only fair to say that there are some chapters of this book which are particularly fine. The writer has grown sober in qualifying his Antinomianism. But in his conclusion the intoxication of the early chapters reappears. He says, for example, that love "is full of considerate lies and sweet deceits, of charming impetuosities and gracious whims and magnificent improprieties". After reading words like these one hastens to repeat to himself the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians in order to change the taste in one's mouth. All the same *Law and Love*

ought to be widely read, not only for the many right things which are in it, but also as an excellent illustration of a protest overbalancing itself.

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BIBLE VERSIONS[1]

" BOOKS about the Bible have Legion for their name (and some of them deserve a Gadarene destiny). Any new-comer to the throng should be challenged to justify his coming." In these words Principal Wheeler Robinson introduces *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions*, which he has edited with the collaboration of six distinguished specialists. This new-comer can face the challenge with confidence. Many of us have for long felt the need of just such a book. It can be recommended both as a work of interest for the general reader and an authoritative introduction for the student.

The opening chapter, by Dr. Wheeler Robinson himself, deals with the Hebrew Bible. He discusses its language, literature and canon, the printed editions, the transmission of the text, criticism of the Masoretic text, and the task of translation. His account of the development of O.T. literature might be described as a modification of the Graf-Wellhausen view in the light of recent discovery; thus, with regard to the priestly law, he says, " Here it should be noted that the dates at which these successive strata of ' law ' were codified gives no further indication of the time of their origin than is afforded by a *terminus ad quem*. Many of the items must, by their nature, go back to a remote period". In his account of the written text, we are reminded that the Hebrew vowel points distinguish quality, not quantity. (If anyone is inclined to doubt this, let him ask himself what inference should be drawn from the fact that the same sign serves for long *a* and short *o* if not that these two differed in quantity only, not in quality.)

Prof. W. F. Howard, of Birmingham, contributes the chapter on the Greek Bible, both LXX and N.T. Here are

[1] *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions.* Edited by H. Wheeler Robinson, M.A., D.D. Humphrey Milford, Oxford (1940). pp. vii, 337. 12*s.* 6*d.* net.

discussed the origin of the LXX, its importance for the textual criticism of the O.T., the importance of Origen's Hexapla in the history of the LXX text, the versions of Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus, and much else of interest. Then comes an admirable account in twenty-three pages of the canon and text of the Greek N.T., ending with a statement of the present position of textual theory in the light of the latest evidence.

After him Prof. T. H. Robinson, of Cardiff, takes up the tale with a chapter on the Syriac Bible. This account is made the more interesting by being placed against the background of the missionary activity of the Syrian Church. Of the surviving results of this activity in India many readers of *The Evangelical Quarterly* know from the writings of Dr. John Stewart (cf. Vol. I, pp. 219 ff.; Vol. IV, p. 331), and it is interesting to be told by Dr. Robinson that the Syrian Church in India " not only survives, but has shown during the twentieth century an increased vitality, and it may well be that, when Indian Christianity becomes a self-conscious whole, the ancient Church will absorb all other types and forms ". His account of the Syriac O.T. treats of the Peshitta (dating from the first or second century A.D., and evidently dependent in places on the LXX), as well as of the later versions by Philoxenus and Paul of Tella. The section on the N.T. tells us of the Diatessaron, the Old Syriac (the best representative of which, the Sinai palimpsest, " may fairly be said " to be " the most important single volume known to exist in the world to-day "), the Peshitta (later than the O.T. Peshitta, being the work of Rabbula, bishop of Edessa, in the fifth century), the Philoxenian and Harkleian versions, and of their varying importance for the history of the original text. " Syriac ", says Dr. Robinson, " is a beautiful language, deserving of far fuller study than it generally receives." *Verb. sap. sat.*

The story of the Latin Bible is told by Mr. H. F. D. Sparks of Durham University, whose qualifications to deal with this subject are sufficiently indicated by his worthy continuation of Wordsworth and White's monumental edition of the Vulgate N.T. From an account of the Old Latin Bible in its African and European forms—a quest as fascinating in its way as any detective tale—he proceeds to the work of Jerome and the subsequent history of the Vulgate. The value of the Latin Bible for textual study and associated problems is illustrated. At the

end of the chapter several characteristics of either the Old Latin or the Vulgate are mentioned, including the additions at Exod. ii. 22; Matt. xvi. 2 f., xx. 28; John iii. 6; Acts viii. 37; 1 John v. 8; but to prevent misunderstanding it should be made clear that only the last of these interpolations *originated* in the Latin Bible.

This ends the first part of the book, and we are left asking for more. We should have liked equally able accounts of other important ancient versions; e.g., the Armenian, Georgian, Coptic and Ethiopic. The Editor and Prof. T. H. Robinson give each a note on the Targums, and the latter has also a brief note on the Coptic, Ethiopic and Gothic versions.

The second part of the book begins with a chapter by Sir William Craigie, who traces the history of the English Bible from the Old English to the Wyclifite versions. It is improbable that Wyclif himself was the author of either of the two versions called after him; Nicholas of Hereford is reasonably credited with part of the earlier (there seems no way of discovering who completed it), while the later is commonly attributed to John Purvey. These were both associates of Wyclif. The Wyclifite tradition ends about 1520, with Murdoch Nisbet's Scots adaptation of Purvey's N.T.; "unfortunately this remained the only attempt to produce a Scottish version of any portion of the Bible". (The vernacular version used in the previous century by the Lollards of Kyle was probably Purvey's.)

The revival of the study of Hebrew and Greek and the invention of printing mark a fresh beginning, and Mr. J. Isaacs, of King's College, London, continues the story in two chapters, "The Sixteenth-Century English Versions" and "The Authorized Version and After". Tribute is paid to Tindale's great scholarship and patient labour in the face of obscurantist opposition and treacherous attack. Then comes the amazing activity in Bible translation between his death and 1611, not even interrupted entirely by the intolerant reign of Mary of England, "whose toll of religious martyrs seems strangely amateurish alongside that of present-day experts". "There is no parallel in literary or religious history to the seventy-five years of endeavour from Tindale's Testament of 1525 to the end of the century, nothing like this concentrated history of pioneer endeavour and patient scholarship. With all their limitations of scholarly equipment, 'there were Giants in

the earth in those daies', and the greatest of these giants was Tindale."

This activity culminated in the 1611 version, the greatest treasure of English literature. Yet, despite the royal patronage, it took time before it displaced the Geneva version of 1560 in popular favour, partly because it lacked the voluminous notes of the Geneva Bible. Annotated editions were much in demand in those days, to judge from a letter of 1664, "I cannot yet get a Bible for the old woman, but one printed 1661, 12*s.* price, and 6*d.* if claspet; but I count that too deare, and not of the edition she desires, with Bezas annotations". Sheer merit told in the long run, however; but attempts at improvement of the translation continued steadily. The history of Bible translation between 1611 and 1800 is a closed book to most, yet not without interest and even amusement, as in Edward Harwood's free rendering into Johnsonese (1768). In 1755 John Wesley published an edition of the N.T., "a careful, humble work, based on minute study of the Greek text".

From the pen of Prof. C. J. Cadoux of Mansfield College comes the chapter on "The Revised Version and After". He deals first with the demand for revision between 1800 and 1870, and refers to various essays in that direction, such as the translations of Alford and Young. Mention might also have been made of the *New Translation* of J. N. Darby, a version very popular in certain circles, and based in the N.T. on a most accurate Greek text, though marred by such infelicitous English as "I have combated the good combat".

As for the R.V. itself, it is curious at this distance in time to recall the violent controversies which it occasioned, and the limpet-like devotion with which men of piety and learning clung to the superseded "Received Text". Its greater accuracy is now generally recognised, although it has failed to take the place of the A.V. in popular estimation. There are, of course, some people who are by temperament hostile to anything new, just as others with equal lack of reason will accept it just because it *is* new; whereas the test question should be, not "Is it new?" but "Is it true?" Certainly the Greek text underlying the R.V. is vastly superior to the best text available in 1611. Whatever may be said about the comparative merit of the translations as such, there is no doubt of the soundness of the R.V. principle that wherever the same original word occurs

in the same sense, it should be rendered by the same English word. The stated policy of the A.V. translators was to use a variety of synonyms, which is a good stylistic principle, but leaves something to be desired when applied to literature requiring such accurate study as the Word of God. The more firmly we believe in the divine inspiration of Scripture, the more zealously should we seek the best text and the most accurate translation. But textual scholars and translators are alike fallible, and perfection has not yet been attained; our task is to stand on the shoulders of the giants who have preceded us and thus attain a little nearer it.

Dr. Cadoux mentions most of the translations offered to the public since the R.V. appeared; the versions of Weymouth, Moffatt, Goodspeed and Powis Smith are briefly reviewed among others. The progress made during the last fifty years, especially in the understanding of the original languages, has already made the R.V. out of date to some extent (its treatment of the Greek tenses was out of date even before it appeared). Dr. Cadoux considers " that the time is ripe for the undertaking . . . of a new version of the whole Bible which shall embody all the knowledge that has accumulated up to the time of its production, and shall profit by all the experience gained in the course of the last half-century ".

The last chapter, by the Editor, on " The Bible as the Word of God ", deals with the questions of Revelation and Inspiration, and with the highest and most abiding value of the Scriptures.

At the end of the book are useful Bibliographies on each chapter, and Indices of Names, Subjects, and Texts.

On p. 157 (end) the number of the verse (1) has been omitted after " Acts x "; p. 190, Sextus should be Sixtus; p. 192 (first line), " leven " should be " linen "; p. 217, Howarth should be Howorth; p. 264, W. H. How should be W.W. How (these two *errata* are reproduced in the Index); p. 285 (footnote), the closing bracket should be supplied after " Phil. ii. 7, 8 ". *De minimis non curat lex*, but a book such as this ought to have even *minima* such as these attended to in its next edition, which should be called for before long.

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NINIAN[1]

Dr. Douglas Simpson, the distinguished Librarian of Aberdeen University, has added another to his contributions to Christian origins in Scotland. Whether he agrees with the views advanced by him in these contributions or not, one cannot withhold admiration for his extraordinary diligence and scholarly research in this admittedly difficult period of early Scottish Church history.

As is well known, Dr. Simpson is one of a small group of Scottish historians, led by the Rev. Archibald Black Scott, D.D., Minister of Kildonan, Sutherlandshire, who stand for a " revolutionary " reconstruction of the early history of the Church in Scotland. They maintain that the extent of Columba's work has been exaggerated by the older historians, and that it was Ninian of Whithorn, and not Columba of Iona, who was the real founder of the Scottish Church. In fairness, however, to Dr. Simpson, it should be stated, that he is not a slavish follower of Dr. Scott. As a matter of fact, he seriously joins issue with him on many points. But, while this is so, and while he himself has abandoned some of the views, to which he gave expression in his earlier works, as being now untenable, he still clings definitely and firmly to the two main positions just indicated.

This, his latest volume, which extends to one hundred and twelve pages, is handsomely printed and reflects great credit on its Edinburgh publishers. It is sufficiently documented, and a serviceable index is supplied. There are fifteen beautiful illustrations and two maps for which the reader will be duly grateful.

In his Preface, Dr. Simpson informs us that his book is " an attempt to reconstruct the historical background and to assess the achievement of St. Ninian, the first recorded Apostle of the country we now call Scotland ". For the accomplishment of this task, he has skilfully utilised his wide and deep erudition in the three sections—*The Background*, *The Preparation* and *The Achievement*—into which he has divided his book. It is disappointing, however, to find that the foundations on which he builds are sometimes lacking in solidity, for which

[1] *St. Ninian and the Origins of the Christian Church in Scotland.* By W. Douglas Simpson, M.A., D.Litt. (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1940.) 112 pp. 10*s. net.*

no amount of intelligent deduction, interesting conjecture or imaginative treatment can compensate. At the same time, it must be admitted that, although his materials, which are masterfully presented, do not justify the construction or the claims he makes, there is much in this brilliant Essay that students should find useful for the reconstruction of the early history of the Scottish Church.

The author, in the first section of his book, gives us a comprehensive and detailed survey of the political, social and religious conditions of the northern frontier of Roman Britain in the period after the rebellion of Magnus Maximus in 383. Against this background he sets the Ninianic mission, which, he suggests, was " a detail " in the re-organisation of the frontier by Stilicho, " Master-General of the Western Armies ", in or about 397. It was the Imperial policy at this time to encourage missionary enterprise. The first missions to the Goths followed upon Constantine's victorious campaign against them, and Dr. Simpson conjectures that " precisely in the same way " the mission of Ninian was " a direct consequence of a vigorous Roman reaction in Pictland " (p. 66). There is no historical evidence, however, that Imperial Rome backed Ninian's mission to the Picts.

Dr. Simpson, in the second section of the volume before us, deals with Ninian's preparation for his missionary enterprise. For the information we possess about Ninian we are indebted to Bede and Ailred. Bede only professes to give the tradition. Ailred's information, apart from what he borrows from Bede, is historically almost worthless. Bede, who wrote about three hundred years after Ninian's death, belonged to the Roman Church, and his statements are, doubtless, coloured by the ideas of his own time. The lateness of the Ninianic tradition and its Roman bias should make us guarded in our interpretation of it.

In order to get Ninian to fit into his scheme of reconstruction, Dr. Simpson accepts Bede's statement that he " received his religious education " in Rome (p. 38), and holds that " religious zeal and education combined supply us with an ample motive " for his visit to " the Eternal City ". He also accepts the additional information given by Ailred that Ninian was consecrated bishop by the Pope, with the declared purpose of conducting a mission " in the western parts of Britain "

(p. 67). He describes for us young Ninian's surroundings in Rome, and puts forward the suggestion that he was not unlikely to meet Augustine from North Africa there, either as a fellow-student (p. 48) or as a pupil (p. 70). It is very doubtful if Ninian ever saw Rome. In order to lend authority to Ninian's mission Bede would require to say that he was trained at Rome. Ailred's statement that he was commissioned by the Pope is merely a medieval effort to dress up Ninian as a Roman bishop.

A more likely theory than the one propounded by Dr. Simpson is that Ninian was one of the youthful soldiers who left Britain with Magnus Maximus for Gaul in 383. Maximus was a friend of Martin of Tours, as Dr. Simpson himself points out, and through Maximus young Ninian would come into touch with Martin. In any case, Tours, and not Rome, was Ninian's spiritual home, and it is an undoubted fact that the type of Christian enterprise he introduced into southern Pictland was that obtaining in Gaul. According to Dr. W. J. Watson, late of the University of Edinburgh, " it is more than possible that, like Martin himself, and like St. Patrick, Ninian received his whole training in Gaul " (*Evangelical Quarterly*, January, 1933). It may be pointed out that Dr. Scott maintains that the Ninianic mission was independent of Rome (see *Rise and Relations of the Church in Scotland*).

" A true perception of Martin's aims, method and achievement," writes Dr. Simpson, " is vital to an understanding of St. Martin " (p. 50). And so he gives us a careful study of the life and work of Martin. He reviews his tyrannical dealings with paganism, his friendly relations with Maximus, the persecution of Priscillian and his followers, with whom Martin sympathised, and Maximus' treatment of them. The reference to " Scottish witch-hunts " (p. 61) in connection with the sufferings of the Priscillianists, at the hands of their persecutors, seems to be based on considerations other than historical. The Priscillianist persecution exerted a profound influence on Martin, we are told, and his own vacillating conduct towards the persecutors weighed so heavily upon his soul that, burdened with deep remorse, he withdrew himself to his monastery at Marmoutier for the remaining sixteen years of his life. Dr. Simpson assumes that it was during this period of his life he attracted Ninian, and finds " in this catenation of circumstances the reason or one of the reasons why the Apostle of Scotland also

gave so strong a monastic bias to the missionary effort which he centred upon Whithorn" (p. 63). Since historical evidence is completely lacking, there is nothing known, with certainty, regarding the form of monasticism which may have existed at *Candida Casa* in Ninian's time. According to the Rev. John Ryan, the monasticism of *Candida Casa* was of a "loose form" at the beginning (*Irish Monasticism*, p. 106). Nor is there any evidence of a historical nature for Dr. Simpson's further statement that Martin's "Western monachism" became, from its first centre at *Candida Casa*, "the pattern to which the Celtic Church, as it afterwards evolved in North Britain, Wales and Ireland, remained constant throughout the period of its great, missionary expansion in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries" (pp. 49–50). The monachism of the Celtic Church in the British Isles, as scholarly research has proved, was of Eastern, not Western, origin. It had an "individuality distinctly its own", which goes to prove that it developed freely under the influence of local colouring, and independently of any outside impulse. It was a natural growth to whose life and spirit Whithorn, Wales and Ireland made each a contribution.

Ninian's achievement from his base at *Candida Casa* is dealt with by Dr. Simpson in the third and last section of his book. There are differences of opinion among historians as to how far Ninian's influence extended. Dr. Simpson shows that there is evidence that *Candida Casa* made its influence felt as far south as Cumberland and Westmorland, where there are dedications to both Martin and Ninian, which seem "decidedly to point to very early influence from Whithorn" (p. 81). He claims that, northwards from *Candida Casa*, Ninian's mission extended as far as the Dee, adding: "This, of course, would not prevent our accepting any valid evidence that Ninian penetrated farther north, even although he did not achieve the conversion of the inhabitants here" (p. 94). The lines of evidence adduced in support of the claim he makes for the northward extension of the Ninianic mission are three-fold—sculptured monuments, literary remains and church sites. These, which are set forth in great detail in his former book, *The Celtic Church in Scotland*, are summarised in the book before us.

Consideration for space will only allow us to refer to Dr. Simpson's last line of evidence. In his *Celtic Church in Scotland*, he admits that it is "impossible to claim that every church site

in Scotland which bears the name of St. Ninian is proof of his presence on the spot" (p. 53). In the book under review, he gives a "severely censored list" (p. 101) of seven church sites, "associated with evidence, archaeological or other, carrying them back beyond the medieval period of dedications to saints in heaven into the time of Celtic missionary enterprise, when a church bore the name of its founder, or the founder of the parent monastery" (pp. 97, 98). They are: Glasgow, Stirling, Arbirlot, Dunnottar, Methlick, Urquhart in Inverness-shire and Navidale in Sutherlandshire. The first four are within the sphere ascribed by Bede to Ninian. The last three sites are outside that area. According to Dr. Watson, our greatest living authority on Celtic Place-Names in Scotland, the site at Methlick is a late commemoration to Ninian. Dr. Simpson, of course, disagrees. At Urquhart in Inverness-shire there is a church site, known as St. Ringan, which in Gaelic is *Cill an Truinnein*. Watson is of the opinion that here Ninian's name was introduced "under the vernacular Scots appellation by the early Scots lords of Glen Urquhart" (*Evangelical Quarterly*, January 1933), and that the site cannot be considered ancient. The same authority holds that Ninian's alleged connection with Navidale depends entirely on a statement by Sir Robert Gordon (*Earldom of Sutherland*, 1630), and that there is no genuine local tradition. Near the churchyard of Ninian at Navidale is *Tobar Innein*, which Dr. Simpson renders *Ninian's Well*, but which is really the *Well of the Anvil*. And *Cladh Innein* (in the same locality), rendered by our author *Ninian's Field*, is the *Graveyard of the Anvil*. It does not appear that any of these last three sites can be claimed for Ninian.

By this criticism, the reviewer by no means wishes to detract from the merits of a valuable contribution to the study of early Scottish Christianity, and to the appreciation of the work of the first Christian missionary in the south "of the country we now call Scotland".

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